

ZAP!64

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

No. 34 FEBRUARY 1988

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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE

PLATOON

SIZZLING ACTION FROM THE SILVER SCREEN

HUNTER'S MOON

A FABULOUS PSYCHEDELIC BLAST, MAN

MATCH DAY II

TOP OF THE LEAGUE

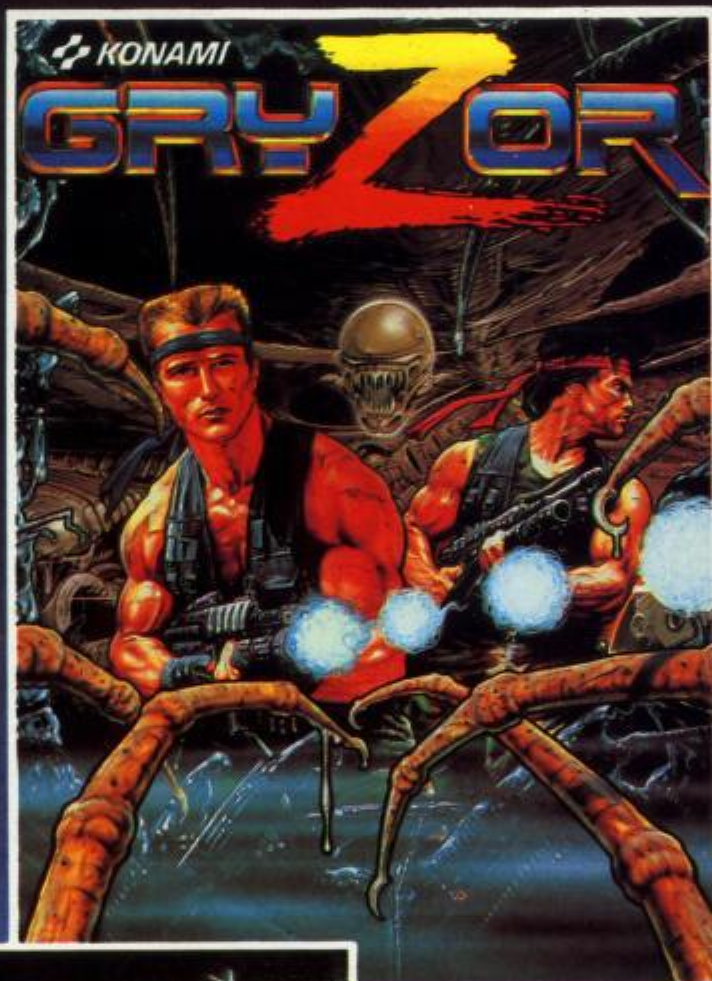
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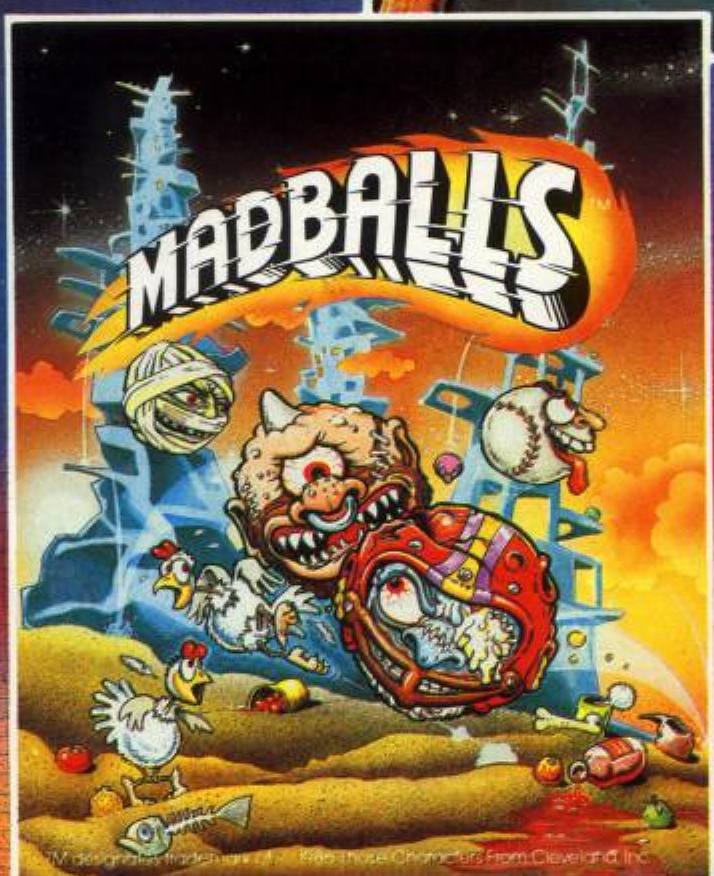
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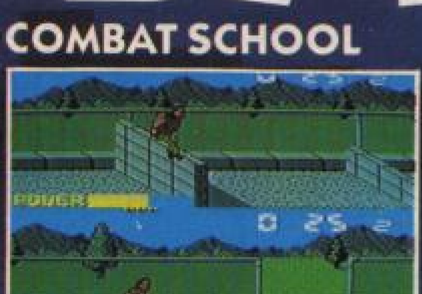
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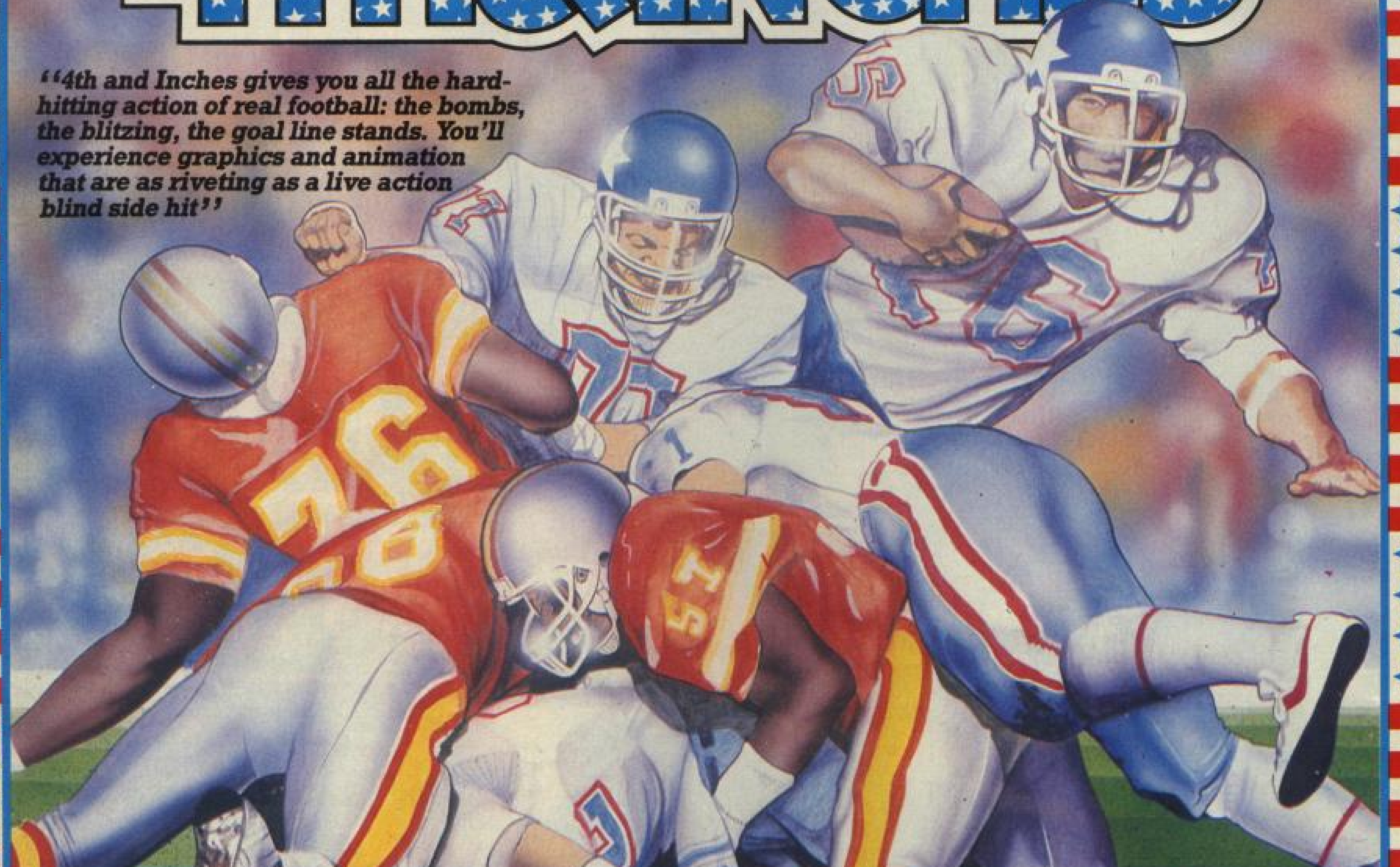
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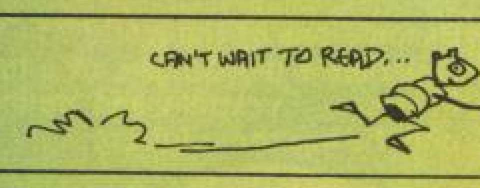
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THE FIRST REGULARS OF 1988

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ZZAP! 35 should be on the shelves by February 11th – and off by the 12th – so hurry, hurry, hurry . . .


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GHOST IN THE MACHINE

We've kicked-off the New Year with the first of a regular monthly round-up of Amiga software. Before you Commodore 64 owners get up in arms and write in to say that 'this is ZZAP! 64 and not ZZAP! 16-Bit', I'd just like to say that there won't be any reduction in review space for your favourite 8-Bit machine. To be honest, the way forward *is* with the 16-Bit machines, and it would be stupid not to realise that, but ZZAP! will continue to put the Commodore 64 first. As far as we're concerned, the future is looking, if anything, brighter for the 64 – every month somebody out there proves that you can teach an old dog some spectacular new tricks!

Already, 1988 is looking like it's going to be a great one for the 64, with a steady stream of post-Christmas games already arriving at the office, including *Garfield*, which arrived a couple of hours past our reviewing deadline, Epyx's long-awaited *Sub Battle Simulator*, Infocom's new *Border Zone*, *Rastan Saga* from Ocean and Gremlin Graphics' *Masters of the Universe*. We've also got some very promising games to look forward to in the coming months, including *Predator*, *Gauntlet II*, Cascade's Vietnam war game, *19*, Microprose's *Project Stealth Fighter* and the one I've really been waiting for – *Impossible Mission II*. Looks like it could be a Happy New Year!

Julian Rignall



ADVERTISERS INDEX

GAMES REVIEWED



Mel Croucher's

UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

G'DAY (Festival of St Peter Wright the Innocent, Australia)

My New Year's resolution is a simple one. It can be summed up in the phrase 'everything to excess'. But what have my chums in the wacky world of software resolved for 1988? Well, **PAULINE 'Leather' GARSDEN** tells me hers is the same as it has been for 14 years: never to make a New Year's Resolution again. 'I broke the last one fifteen minutes after midnight on January the First 1974.' Whatever can she mean? Infogrames supremo **DAVID CROSSWELLER** is pithy as ever, not to mention streaming mucus. He has resolved 'to stay away from Pauline bloody Garsden when she's got the flu!' My old pal **COLIN 'Grange Hill' JONES** resolves 'to finish my West Country beat 'em up, which I'm calling *Ooh-arr Kung Fu!*'

REMEMBRANCE DAY (Republic of Amnesia)

I feel like giving **DAVID KRAWCZYK** a mention for starting an MSX user's club, but firstly this is a Commodore rag, and secondly David is really too silly a name even for me to write about. But this is definitely the final entry in Under The Baudwalk concerning silly names in computing, and I am happy to give the last word to my friends at GREMLIN. They have had the honesty to rename the author of their *Deflektor* after the amount of royalties due to programmers, as recently agreed at the the Program Royalties for Independent Computer Kids Symposium in Geneva. So it is that the author's name **COSTA PANAYI** translates from the original Phoenecian as 'I work for peanuts'. Speaking of silly names, I receive the most charming reprimand today. Allow me to quote, 'Dear Mr Croucher, we may be taking libel here! Your totally unjust claims have had a tragic effect on the fragile balance of my children's minds, in fact I have seen one hiding in the corner with a BOOK! In the interest of journalistic truth, I must correct your attack on my husband's name which implies a slur of a sexual nature. **STEFAN UFNOWSKI** is in fact Polish for 'I know absolutely nothing about eroticism'. Yours, Ann Iknoweverythingabouteroticism Ufnowski'.

Really, this is an abortive attempt to get me to publicise the fact that old Stefan has quit Adventuresoft and is now heading up TARANN, which only employs programmers with Very Silly Names. And if they expect me to say that their wonderful *Captain America* is about to be followed by their even more wonderful *Dream Demon*, they must think I'm dafter than I look. No free publicity from a man like me who has been described as the Jack Nicholson of Software.

ASCENSION DAY (Fiesta de la Pantaloon Stiffado)

I am cheesed off with having my reputation as a holy man abused. I was stupid enough to stumble into print about certain charitable acts that I occasionally indulge in. I deserve no sympathy for this, and freely admit that the line between making others feel better and massaging your own ego is a very thin one. But the next person who rattles a tin at me, or asks me to donate my software collection, or wants me to prat about at some fund-raising farce can go stick their head up a dead bear's bum. The latest bit of moral blackmailing is by no less a bad dream than **CILLA BLACK**, who writes me a nauseating whine, and uses a deaf and blind kid to put the screws on. Worra lorra borrocks, Cilla. Firstly I resent my name being targeted by the likes of overpaid hostesses of gutter television. Secondly, I resent being patronised or in this case matronised by the assumption that I am not already helping certain kids. Thirdly, I resent being blackmailed. Recently I got a letter from a 13 year old named Paul who 'already has too many damn problems of my own without having my morale destroyed by you'. I greatly upset him by killing off 'Tamara Knight' with cancer of the stomach, instead of marrying her off to the neutron bomb. And in turn his sad little letter greatly upset me. Maybe he'll write to me when he's 16 or so, and I can tell him how and why I based Tamara on a very real young lady. Ho hum. The final straw comes with this pathetic note from a little girl who really does need my immediate aid. 'Dear Uncle Mel, please, please, help me with my computer gaming. I have been trying to play *Football Manager* for two years now, and I still can't get the hang of it'. I must reply right away. Ahem, 'Dear Roberta Maxwell, the idea of this game is to take YOUR team to the top, not to buy the entire League. Perhaps you would be happier playing *The Guild Of Thieves.*'

MAUNDY TURDSDAY (Panama)

Nice to see **GARY PENN** has picked up a bit of work modelling for the artwork of Software Projects' *Hysteria*. There he is, nicely tanned and rubbed down with baby oil, playing with his Bullworker, while two Cilla Blacks peer over each of his well-muscled shoulders. All this talk of nicely oiled gentlemen puts me in mind of Ocean's **DAVID WARD**. For what it's worth (about three double vodkas in Jersey next March) it is is my unsolicited opinion that Ocean's pupation of Denton Design's *Eco (A Game Of Survival)* is the most original concept I have ever played since opening time. The publicity artwork verges on the inspired, the graphics are a mixture of Salvador Dali and Egyptian graffitti, and the gameplay has all your favourite ingredients of 3D vectors, extreme violence and sexual intercourse – and that's while I'm still in the amoeba stage! In fact *Eco* is the most imaginative software product since I first thought it up in 1984. But it was in 1983 that an infant toddled in to my palatial offices, school cap on his head, Joe 90 glasses on his nose, with a computer program. I seem to remember giving him a bag of Jelly Tots and getting his mum to sign a scrap of paper making his soul over to me for all eternity, or his 14th birthday, whichever came the sooner. She was very suspicious of me, due to my finely spun shoulder-length hair and the diamante ear-ring in my left lughole. Today, that very same toddler has blossomed and flowered into a fine figure of a man, stalking the alleyways of Portsmouth with his very own shoulder-length hair and ear-ring, and **JAS AUSTIN** has gone and programmed *Slaine*. I really hate to tell him that I am now a balding husk, and that he is going to have to change his whole image. It's so hard to be a role model, so very hard.

ST.VALENTINES DAY (Virgin Islands)

FERGUS McNEIL is another gentleman whom I corrupted when he was fresh out of nappies, and so it is that I am deeply moved by his coming to me in my role as role model and Godfather, to gain permission for him to marry the lovely Anna. I wish him every happiness, and naturally grant my permission. I'll even waive my usual fee and droit de seigneur clause, so fond of him am I. I hardly dare ask what his New Year's resolutions are, but that doesn't stop me. Fergus replies, 'I resolve to become respectable and settle down, just like you, Godfather. I resolve to say nice things about **ROD COUSENS**, like how brilliant he is and please can I have a cheque, just like you Godfather. I resolve never EVER to let the computer magazines do THAT to me again.' Ah Fergus, how alike we are. Give or take 21 years.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY (except Ludlow).

Modesty forbids me to claim responsibility for the AIDS-like VIRUS that is contaminating Commodore disks. The Editor forbids me to publicise computer rags of rival publishers, so I'm unable to tell you about my amazing cartoon series 'Rebel of World Zero' in Unclear User, wherein my hero released his electronic virus three months before the real thing. It's so hard being a role model.

CANDLEMAS (Lardsarse-on-Wick)

One of the most revolting role models must be Reg Smyth's *Andy Capp*. And the young lady who has put her name to this morning's press release that flops on my mag should be thoroughly ashamed of herself. The game involves encouraging young males to act like a pig-ignorant slob, nicking your wife's handbag so you can pop down the boozer to attempt adultery, get well oiled without paying for your own drinks, blow kisses at the rent-man, and when you've got him nice and hot, punch him in the gob. On-screen options include 'rob the sod' and 'give her some'. I do hope that some national newspaper launches a moral crusade to expose this sort of corrupting male chauvinism, the Daily Mirror for example. What's this? A note scrawled on the Press Release, 'Dear Mel, as you are the nearest human equivalent to Andy Capp that I know, blow a kiss in my direction . . .' Eer, Andy Capp? Isn't he the Bishop of Durham? Splendid fellow.

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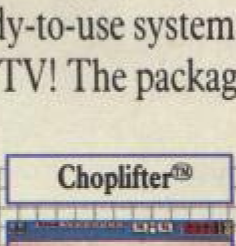
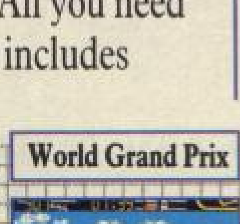
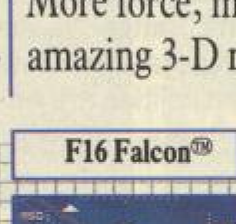
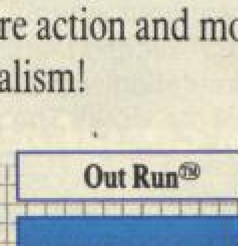
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FLYING SHARK

Firebird, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Firebird's coin-op conversion of Taito's *Flying Shark* sees the player take to the air in the plane of the title.

Roaring over vertically scrolling enemy territory, the player battles through Squadrons of fighters which approach from the top of the screen, intent upon repelling the solo craft with a hail of bullets. Ground defences also enter the fray, in the shape of mobile tanks and static gun implacements.

The Shark is armed with a gun and an unlimited supply of ammunition, plus three smart bombs which are fired from the plane to explode at a safe distance, destroying all enemies in its path. The number of smart bombs remaining is shown at the side of the screen, together with the lives remaining and the current score.



The arcade version sports some lovely graphics, but isn't the most awe-inspiring game of all time. On the Commodore, you lose the graphics and end up with yet another in a long line of vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups. The action is very tough from the outset, and by the time level three is reached, the enemy both on the ground and in the air are getting incredibly aggressive. The plane is a little on the sluggish side, making it difficult to avoid enemy bullets, and I don't like the way the plane has to move a quarter of the way across the screen before the landscape scrolls. Flying Shark **is by no means a bad conversion, but as a Commodore game it just has nothing new or exciting to offer.**



Oh dear, I feel a severe case of the Biggles syndrome coming on here. I can think of many vertically scrolling shoot 'em up games involving you as the daring pilot of an aircraft, braving enemy flak and anti-aircraft missiles – so why produce another one? Graphically the game is good, with a rather cartoonesque aeroplane zooming across a nicely detailed, smooth scrolling landscape. The difficulty level is very high, with enemy tanks and aeroplanes spanging bullets all over the shop, and initial interest is soon replaced by frustration as wave after wave of baddies kick the hell out of you. All the ingredients are there for a good blast, but it seems that the enemy have a much better time than you do.



► **Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the air . . . *Flying Shark***

Supplementary firepower may be acquired by collecting the floating symbols which are released upon the destruction of specific attack waves. These endow the Shark with extra guns, bombs and planes, depending on the colour of the downed aircraft.

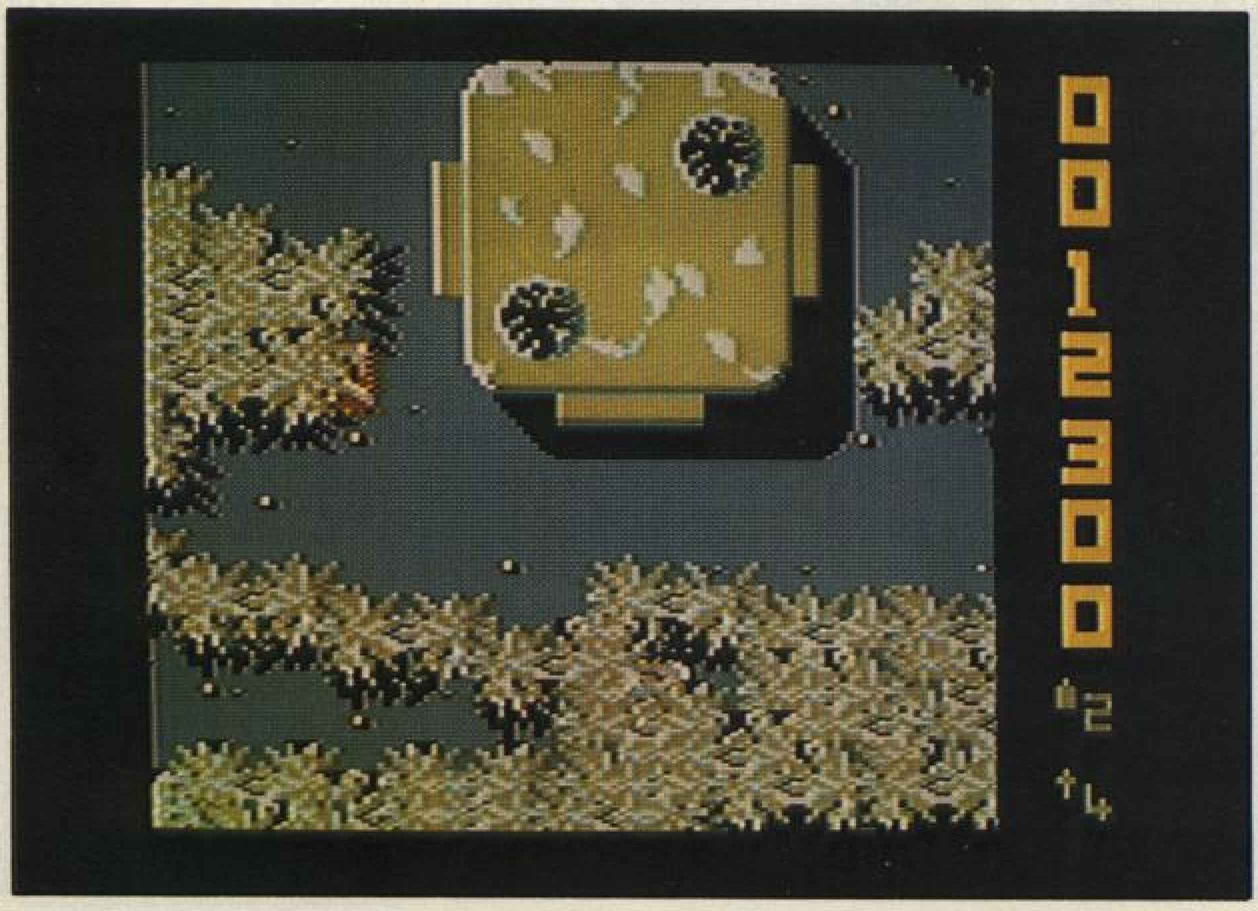
Points are awarded for every successful 'kill', and accumulation of points is rewarded with additional planes, up to a maximum of nine. As a further incentive, the total annihilation of enemy formations yields a large bonus, whenever the 'one up' symbol flashes on-screen.

There are a total of five levels to be conquered, each of which is loaded in separately. A continue option allows later levels to be played again, rather than having to return to the first one each time the game ends.



Yet another difficult shoot 'em up vertically scrolls its way into the office to join the likes of Hades Nebula, Vengeance, Blazer **and so on. Visually, the game is reasonable, (although at times, green planes attack across a grassy areas and completely disappear) and my ears are none the worse for wear, but I'm afraid that for me,** Flying Shark **proves to be more a course in self-restraint than anything else. The game is very hard and extremely frustrating: you're constantly assailed by swarms of enemy craft who attack with unnerving frequency and deadly accuracy.** Flying Shark **does provide a challenge, but satisfaction is hard-won, and at the expense of a large chunk of patience.**

► **Vertically scroll your bi-plane over jungle territory in Firebird's conversion of the Taito coin-op**



PRESENTATION 69%
Crummy title screen and lacks a restart. The continue option redeems the awkward multiload system.

GRAPHICS 79%
Colourful, but occasionally blocky backdrops, with some effective animation and smooth scrolling. The sprites are adequate in look and movement.

SOUND 70%
The main soundtrack is alright, and the end-of-game jingles are bland, but inoffensive.

HOOKABILITY 60%
The initial level of difficulty is a hard factor to overcome.

LASTABILITY 57%
Proficiency maketh progress – but it's slow and often painful.

OVERALL 63%
A frustratingly difficult shoot 'em up of limited appeal.

SIZZLER

MATCHDAY II

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

●Brilliant footballing action in Ocean's sequel to *Matchday*

The original *Matchday* was first released on the Spectrum, and was critically acclaimed as one of the best sports simulations of its time. The Commodore version, however, was very poor and only ever appeared on the *They Sold a Million II* compilation. Now authors Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond have collaborated again to design the successor, *Matchday II*, with John Darnell providing the 64 version.

One or two players participate in anything from a one-off match, to a full-blown league or cup competition. Before kick-off, the player is given a series of menus allowing him to change virtually any aspect of the game to suit his needs. This starts with the option to compete against either a human or computer opponent, or even have two human players against the computer. The colour of the teams' strips and the pitch can also be changed, and handicapping introduced by giving one team the advantage of starting the match with a previously specified number of goals (or perhaps to simulate a two-leg game?).



► The kickometer shows the strength of kick – ideal for fouls!

Other factors that may be altered include attacking or defensive tactics for either team, the time played for each half, human or computer-controlled goalkeepers, and the volume of sound effects.

During a game, the player controls one man at a time, depending on which footballer is closest to

► Ritman and Drummond's brilliant sequel to the dire *Matchday*



For five long years, International Soccer **has been regarded as the best football game available on the Commodore. Now things have changed –** Match Day II **has arrived. It's sheer depth is unbelievable. There are 17 screens of options, allowing nearly all of the game's parameters to be changed. Options include one or two player games and twin player mode – where both players play on the same team. There are league and cup competitions, with the league perfectly structured to challenge the player to the full. One of the real beauties is the way that the players are selected to receive the ball – the computer always seems to select the right player. The control method is incredible, and allows a wide variety of kicks, passes, vollies, chips and backheels with the minimum of hassle, and all dead ball situations are fully controllable. The gameplay is very challenging – the lowest level is tricky, and beating the high level should take an awful lot of practice. The best thing of all is that** Match Day II **plays just like a game of football – which is surely the highest commendation one can give.**



Another footy game? 'Can it possibly be better than good old International Soccer**?' is the question on everyone's lips. Personally I think they're on a par.** Match Day II**'s playability is hampered by the lack of speed during play, but the amazing series of options more than make up for this deficiency. The kickometer is a great idea and allows a skilled player to put together some really intricate moves. However, when all is said and done, I can only see this appealing to ardent football fans – it's just too much like football, and not enough like an arcade game – it's up to you to decide whether that's a good or bad thing.**



► The players may hobble about the pitch, but the action is still quite hectic in *Matchday II*

the ball in play. Moving the ball around is achieved using a 'kickometer' – a constantly pulsing bar displayed both at the top of the screen and above the currently controlled player's head. The strength of the kick is determined by the size of the bar when the fire button is pressed, even to the point of allowing the player to perform backheels when the meter displays a negative amount. The ball's direction is determined by the position of the joystick.

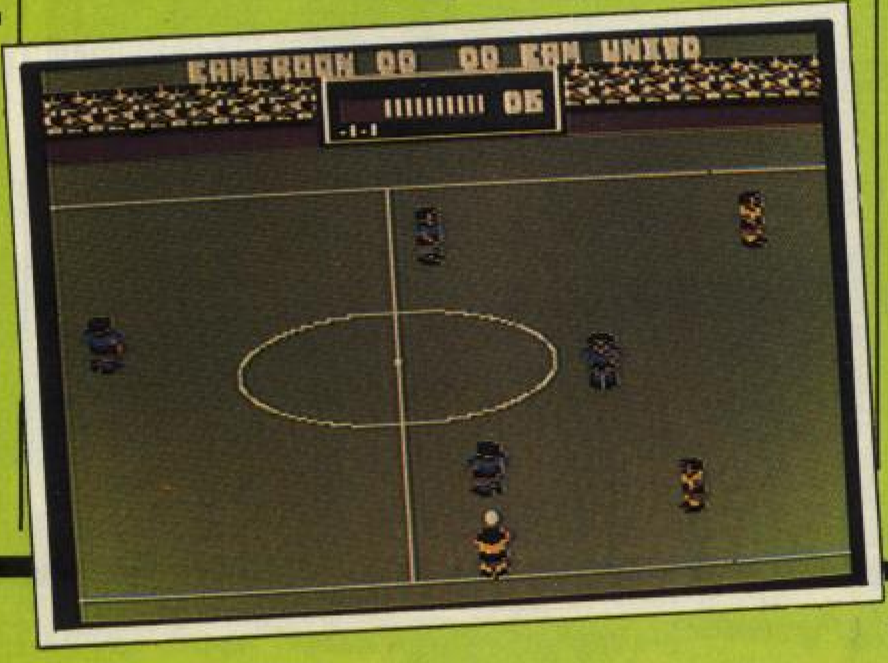
If a player has possession of the ball, he may either chip it, if he kicks while running, or pass along the ground if kicking when stationary. A player who doesn't have the ball may 'lock' his personal kickometer by keeping the button down. This means that when he next touches the ball, he will instantly volley it with the strength displayed above his head. He may also head the ball with any strength he wishes by pressing the button when the player is below the airborne ball.

One player may affect the course of another by barging into him, forcing him to miss-kick. Fouls are not catered for, so over-zealous challenges remain unpenalised.

The program supports throw-ins, corners and goal kicks (which provide a greatly increased kick strength for realistic range), and a realistic deflection system whereby the ball rebounds correctly from a player's body, dependent upon the direction and speed of both ball and footballer.



► 'Ere we go! 'Ere we go! 'Ere we go! (classic prose courtesy of the Dan Gilbert School of Sporting Anecdotes)





Hurrah! Two good football simulations in one month! This is a very accurate football simulation, more than a 'game', as it allows the players to perform most of the moves they could want, even down to backheels. Admittedly it's less spectacular than Gary Lineker's**, but far more satisfying to play, as goals really do have to be built up. The twin player option is a superb idea too, taken from the likes of** Kick-and-Run, **and makes matches far more entertaining ('over 'ere, son, on me 'ed'), as well as giving some variation from the old one-against-one style. The niggles about the game diminish as you play it, but are nevertheless annoying – the slowness of the players' movement, and the glitches which occasionally cause the ball to disappear. Some of the computer 'intelligence' also suffers from** International Soccer**-isms, with control sometimes not being handed over quick enough. These are insignificant though, when compared to the depth of the game, and the options available before and during play. It's too good to miss.**



PRESENTATION 96%
An absolutely amazing array of options and superb use of joystick – the occasional glitches are annoying, though.

GRAPHICS 72%
Very effective, but slow.

SOUND 79%
Great title tune, and suitable sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 81%
As it IS football, the rules are pretty obvious, but some of the controls, especially the kickometer, are tricky to master.

LASTABILITY 92%
Three increasingly tough skill levels and the incredible options should keep a football fan happy in the months to come.

OVERALL 90%
Probably the most accurate football simulation to date, and despite some flaws, is a thoroughly enjoyable kickabout.

ANDY CAPP

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Andy Capp, the flat-capped Northerner is once more in financial trouble. His precious dole cheque has been stolen, and his ever tolerant wife Flo is demanding money again. Andy has a week in which to retrieve his cheque AND raise some money to keep Flo off his back.

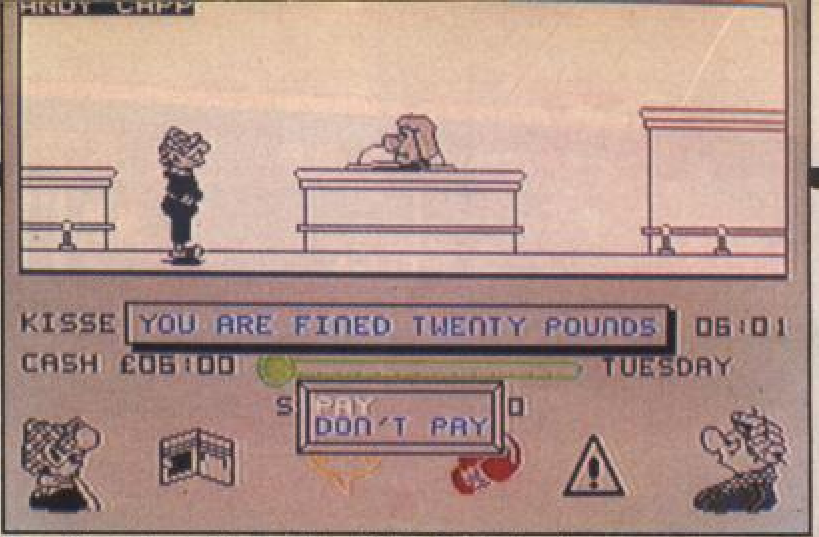
On leaving his house, our anti-hero finds himself in the familiar surroundings of his neighbourhood, where he walks along the many streets, and enters unlocked buildings such as the pub, police station and even the local Job Centre.



I've been reading the Andy Capp cartoon strips in the Daily Mirror for years, so I was interested to see how this game would turn out. The verdict? Well, it's not too bad. The game itself is fairly easy to get into, although mapping is an essential part of play, since it's quite easy to get lost in the maze of similar-looking streets. The graphics are generally very sombre, and although they capture the spirit of the cartoon, after several sessions I was left with a vaguely depressed feeling. The poignant soundtrack merely enhances the feeling and far from enjoying the action, I found it all rather sad. Andy Capp could be a little too close to the life that many people actually lead to be considered entertainment.



After many years of hilariously funny cartoons in the Daily Mirror newspaper, Mirrorsoft have at last taken our favourite Northern lad, flat cap and all, and immortalised him on the computer screen. The game designers have captured the essence of the cartoon strip very well, creating all the ambience of a bleak, Northern coal-mining town. The characters are exceptional, and the animation is simply brilliant. Aesthetics apart, however, the gameplay does tend to pall quite quickly, since Andy's activities are far from thrilling, and walking around town can be continued for one or two minutes without actually meeting anyone or being able to enter a building. The sound effects are totally unsuitable, made up of just a few pings and tromping noises as Andy strolls around. The optional musical score doesn't improve on the situation either. Arcade adventurers might like it, but action wallahs beware.



The cartoon-style graphics of *Andy Capp* follow the newspaper strip with brilliant accuracy

The Lancashire lad must find out who has stolen his cheque by gathering as much information as he can from the characters he meets. Poor old Andy needs a drop of Dutch courage before interrogating his friends though, so a visit to the local pub is the first order of the day. Andy's state of inebriation is constantly monitored by an 'alcometer' shown below the main screen.

Actually getting into a pub can be difficult, since the rent man frequently waits at the door to collect Andy's money. There are others who also give Andy a hard time, especially the local bobby who knows that Andy is on his wanted list.

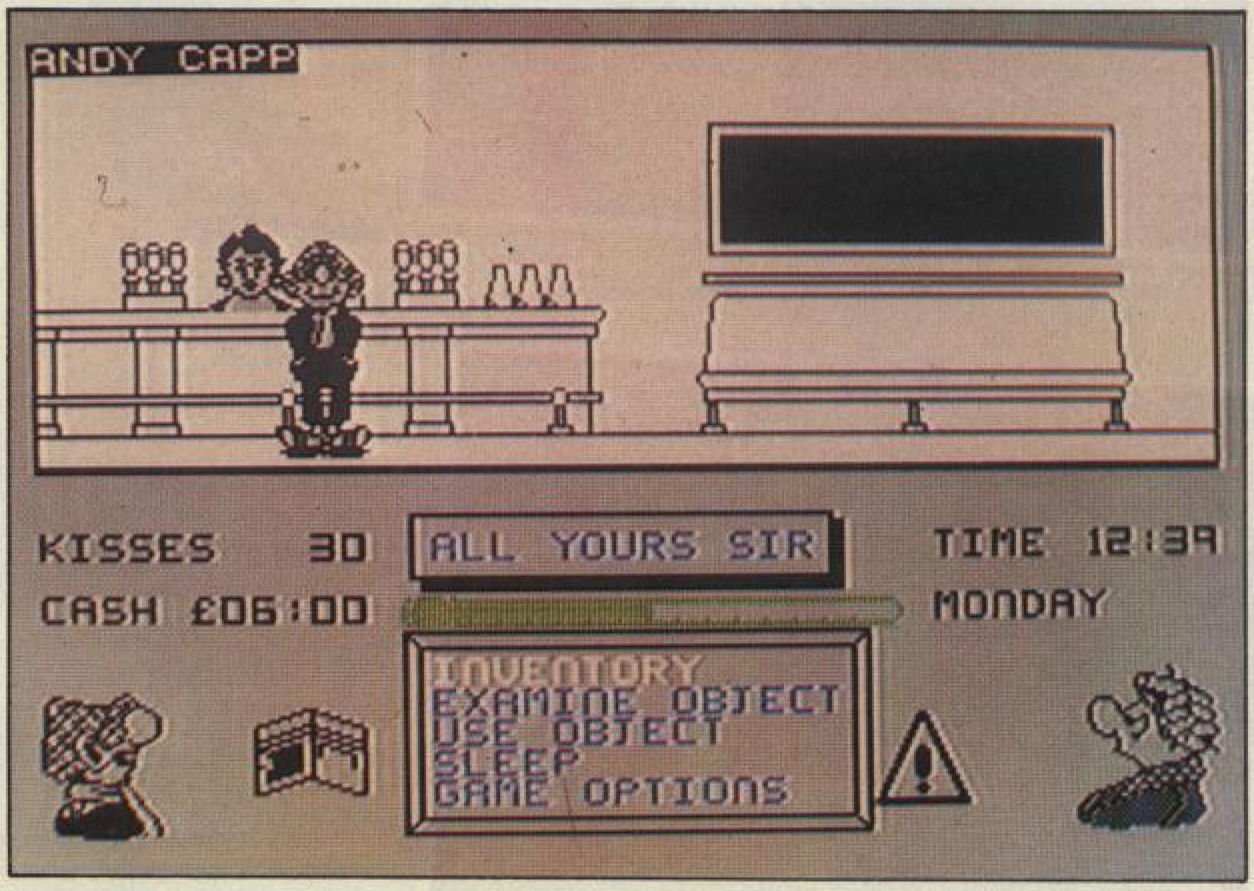
If Andy feels that ab individual should be taught a lesson, he can use the boxing glove icon at the bottom of the screen to engage in some gentlemanly fisticuffs. Punch-ups quickly reduce his alcohol level, however, and a pub must be found fast! If he engages in too many rounds of boxing he can find himself up before the judge with a hefty fine to pay. He must also be careful that in the scuffle, he doesn't lose his wallet.

Such things can only worsen Andy's sad plight, so to augment his scant financial resources, Andy can take a chance on picking the winner of the next horse race, and with a bit of luck scrounge some cash from the barman or get away with Flo's handbag without her knowing. If all else fails, he can always get a job!



The impressive graphics on Andy Capp can easily seduce the unwary gamester. The characterisation is incredibly effective and very accurate indeed, while the game itself is nicely polished, even down to the darkening sky as night falls. Unfortunately, the mission confronting the player is hardly an exciting one: Andy has to wander all over town, speaking to people, obtaining money and drinking. The action is humourous and quite captivating at first, but the long periods of inactivity soon inflict a feeling of boredom – the game becomes as tedious as the life portrayed of Andy. The droning soundtrack doesn't help either, which is almost depressing. Andy Capp is a charming little game, which could well appeal to many people, but don't be fooled by the smart graphics and the character licence.

Andy relaxes in his normal environment – hic!



PRESENTATION 87%
Easy-to-use icon system, with a healthy array of useful options.

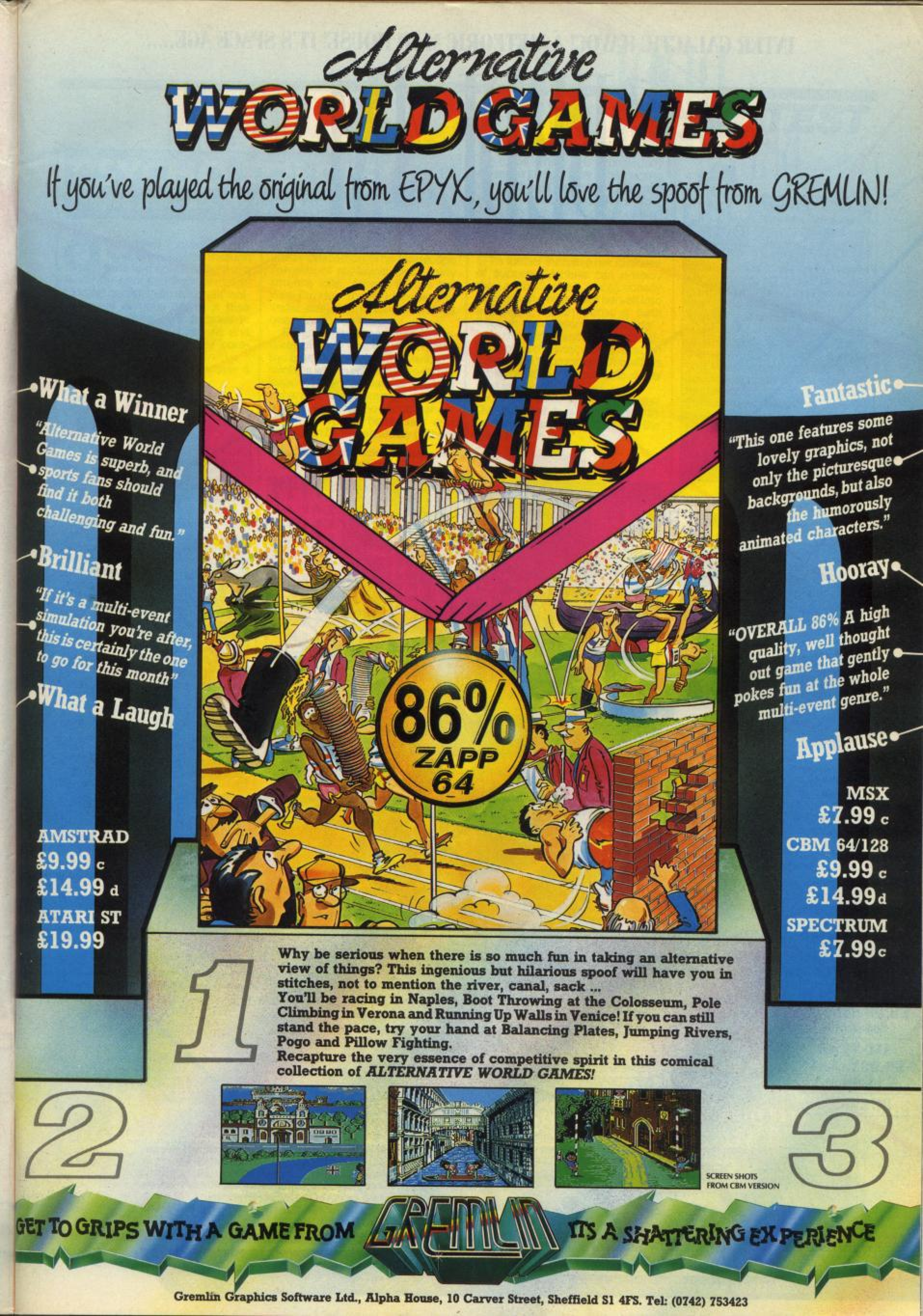
GRAPHICS 86%
Very reminiscent of the cartoon, with superb cartoon characters set against spartan, but extremely effective backdrops.

SOUND 47%
A poor rendition of Dvorjak's 'New World' symphony drones along, but can be toggled for the harsh and inappropriate effects.

HOOKABILITY 72%
The going is tough, with sparse instructions and some rather tame gameplay.

LASTABILITY 58%
Mapping and completing the game represents a lengthy pastime, but the action is less than conducive to actually doing so.

OVERALL 69%
A brilliant incarnation of the comic strip character, marred by sporadic and often tedious play.


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Alternative WORLD GAMES
86% ZAPP 64
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Fantastic
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PSYCHO SOLDIER

Imagine, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys

Once again the voluptuous Athena is whisked through time and space to fight in a world far removed from her own. Finding herself in an alternate reality where demons rule over their human captives, she decides to seek out the cruel overlord and despatch him, freeing her comrades from oppression.

The mission takes place over a horizontally scrolling backdrop of urban desolation. The landscape consists of six levels, each thirty screens long. Athena battles her way through the landscape and walks along one of four 'floors' set one above the other.

Progress is hampered by concrete blocks, which are removed by blasting, and the overlord's minions whom she shoots with her laser. Her arsenal is further enhanced by a limited stock of bombs, fired via the space bar.

The power of both laser and bomb can be increased by gathering icons which are occasionally revealed when the obstructing hard core is destroyed. Bombs have differing capabilities, indicated by the colour of the energy bar at the bottom of the screen. The number of bombs carried is also shown on-screen.

To further increase her chances of success, Athena can destroy the globe which occasionally appears and transform herself into a Dragon, which burns a path through the overlord's defences.

At the end of each level a building blocks the way, and is razed to the ground to progress. Only when a pile of rubble remains does the next level load.

On the sixth level is the evil Overlord, who is destroyed by repeated blasting to complete the mission.



I thought the Psycho Soldier arcade game was awful – and unfortunately it's been converted to the Commodore 64 lock, stock and barrel. The gameplay is nothing brilliant, a sort of very simple platform game with rudimentary shoot 'em up overtones. Little things annoy, such as Athena not being able to turn round fast enough, and being very sluggish to respond to the joystick. Another annoying thing is that when a level is loaded, the action stops . . . and starts instantly. Each level takes quite some time to load – so you're forced to sit in front of the machine. Why the action isn't held up until the fire button is pressed is beyond me. Psycho Soldier fans may find the action enjoyable, but I don't think the majority of Commodore owners will.

► **Tough-girlie Athena battles her way through a war-torn alternate reality**



► **Athena makes a comeback in Imagine's arcade conversion of *Psycho soldier***





Everyone's favourite goddess has returned – Athena, righter of wrongs, friend of small furry animals and scourge of all baddies. The gameplay is naff, and guiding the slow-moving Athena around the screen is frustratingly hard – quite often an enemy sprite zooms out from the side of the screen, giving you no chance to react. The sound consists of a pleasant, if rather twee tune (which I personally feel doesn't fit into a hack and slay type game), and the graphics are quite colourful – but generally I failed to find much in the way of enjoyment.



After the less-than-thrilling debut of Athena, I was hoping a little more from the sequel. Unfortunately, the gameplay is very reminiscent of its predecessor, which consists of very straightforward shooting and collecting. The action never really peaks, and simply keeps up a sustained level of difficulty. The graphics are similarly stark, and while the same backdrops slowly crawl past, interest begins to waver. Collision detection is also at fault: on many occasions, Athena's laser bolts go whizzing straight through concrete and creatures alike without incurring any damage. If you like your action frustrating and slow – this is the one for you.

PRESENTATION 59%
With the exception of a pause mode and keyboard option, fairly standard. The multiload is lengthy.

GRAPHICS 62%
Simply animated sprites slide across bleak, but neatly drawn backdrops.

SOUND 60%
Average soundtrack and effects.

HOOKABILITY 62%
Frustrating from the outset, and the action isn't exciting.

LASTABILITY 51%
Six tough levels, but there's a distinct lack of variety . . .

OVERALL 57%
An average conversion of an none-too-impressive arcade machine.

ZZAP! TEST

GALACTIC GAMES

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only



On a planet far away from their original home, the Olympic Games take a Galactic turn.

Competitors are faced with five unusual events: the 100m slither, space hockey, psychic judo, head throwing and the metamorph marathon.

In the 100m slither, racing worms speedily slide along the track, bunching their bodies in caterpillar motion. Rhythmic joystick wobbling induces the fastest motion, and occasionally a 'super slither' may be used to zoom up the course – although care must be taken not to overheat the worm.

Once the worms have been dismissed, space hockey appears on the agenda. Here, two spheres enter a giant playing field and attempt to drive a living puck into the opposition's goal.

Next is psychic judo, where two mindbenders stand at either end of a corridor and attempt to destroy each other with energy bolts squeezed from their stomachs. When an energy bolt has been released it's directed to avoid the defensive shields that the opponent erects. If the bolt gets through, points are awarded.

Head throwing follows. The competitors in this sport are a strange pair, who are obsessed with removing their heads and throwing them as far as they can. This action takes place on a small track down which competitors run. Before the foul throw line, they rip off their heads and throw them into the air. There are three throws per contest and the longest throw wins.



Galactic Games **is certainly weird and wacky – but unfortunately it's also pretty dire. Control is slow and often sluggish, and added to the fact that many of the events are hard to master, I can't see many people returning to it very often. The multiload is pretty laborious and one point that really annoys me is the 'humourous' information printout that appears periodically during the game – usually at the beginning of an event. The first time it's funny, second time it's a little tedious, and by the third time you feel like screaming. It's slow, endless and has to be endured game after game.** Galactic Games **could have been fun, but at the end of the day I'm sad to say that it falls flat on it's face, a long way short of the finishing line.**

► **A scene from the head-throwing event from Activision's *Galactic Games***





Not content with bringing us Earthbound athletic type games, those cheerful chappies from Activision are taking us out to the stars to thrill to such events as the metamorph marathon, head throwing and psychic judo. Control of most events is a touch on the finnicky side, and even when mastered I often felt that I wasn't totally in control. Graphically, Galactic Games **is a bit of a mixed bag, varying from average on the 100 metre slither, to horribly naff on psychic judo. Sound is also disappointing, with a few annoying effects and no tune. It's not exactly one of my favourite sports games, and can't be called a bargain at £10, but it's fun to play – for a while.**

KNIGHTMARE

Activision, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick and keys

In an extremely strange licensing deal, Activision have released a game based on the popular children's TV programme, Knightmare. The original featured a team of kids directing a blindfolded friend around a computer-generated labyrinth of puzzles. In this version, the player guides a helpless knight around a similarly perplexing series of dungeons.

The display features cutaway 3D, viewing rooms as pages in a book. Each time the knight moves from room to room, the page turns to show the next scene. Commands other than movement are achieved from the keyboard, whereby single key presses represent the verbs and nouns of the command.

The knight's objective is to escape from the castle, collecting items to help him do so, and avoiding the creatures that dwell within. Occasionally, the knight encounters magical creatures who set riddles that must be answered correctly for safe passage. Failure to answer within a time limit or selecting the wrong response from those provided, results in death.

To aid the knight in his quest, he may consult the twin oracles that monitor his progress. These consist of one good and one bad, who attempt to help and hinder him.

► **Activision's highly polished but dreadfully obscure arcade adventure**





Adventure-oriented arcade games are very much an acquired taste – especially when they're as frustratingly hard to play as this one. The contrived gameplay and apparently illogical puzzles conspire to make Knightmare **a very peculiar game, which is definitely aimed at the adventure market. If the TV programme had been as difficult as this, the poor old contestants wouldn't have stood a chance! Graphically, it's very good: the backgrounds and various disembodied heads that appear to give you advice and ask riddles, are all very nicely drawn, as is the burning candle which acts as your lifeforce meter. Sadly, though, the animated sprites leave a lot to be desired, shuffling around the screen in a disinterested fashion.**

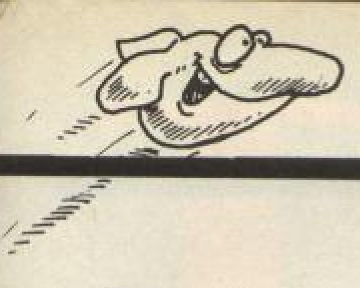


I was immediately impressed with the presentation of Knightmare **– especially the effect of a turning page to create the impression of a storybook scenario. The graphics are inoffensive and generally the game is fairly polished and easy to use. After playing for a while, however, my natural ineptitude for adventures became clear, when practically zero progress was made. The game has some** very **obscure puzzles and the series of actions employed to negotiate the labyrinth can be extremely elusive. I'm sure that many people will find** Knightmare **enjoyable and probably complete it too. For the more hectic action-seekers like myself, however, I would suggest that it may not be your cup of tea.**

The player can gain many clues by examining their comments and statements.

The knight also finds magic, which may be used for a variety of purposes. Where, when and how to use the spells must be deduced by the player.

The knight's life force is represented on the right of the screen as an ever decreasing candle, which recedes more rapidly when under



The last event is the metamorph marathon, during which one of five forms – runner, burrower, jumper, flyer or rest state – is adopted by the metamorph to negotiate the ever-changing terrain. The energy supply of each form is limited, so a little planning is required to finish the course.

PRESENTATION 40%
The multiload system is a real pain, and the general presentation and control methods are poor.

GRAPHICS 41%
Vary from below average to pathetic.

SOUND 32%
Grating and annoying spot effects are used throughout.

HOOKABILITY 45%
Nearly all the events have awkward control methods, making them difficult to master.

LASTABILITY 36%
The frustrating gameplay and lack of reward don't make for lasting appeal.

OVERALL 42%
A mixed bag of naff 'sports' events.

attack. The knight may defend himself when in possession of a weapon, by rapidly pressing the fire button to inflict damage on the attacking creatures. When the wick is completely burnt out the knight dies and the player's quest is terminated.

PRESENTATION 81%
Fairly clear instructions, with an original and polished display and a particularly useful RAMsave option.

GRAPHICS 71%
The sprites lack animation and definition, but the backdrops are atmospheric.

SOUND 5%
Merely a few pathetic sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 47%
Hardened adventurers may find the going straightforward, but occasional explorers are thrown in at the deep end.

LASTABILITY 68%
The large maze and taxing puzzles should keep most players struggling for a while.

OVERALL 66%
An unusual and interesting idea that suffers from laborious, obscure and unsatisfying gameplay.

WINTER OLYMPIAD 88

Tynesoft, £9.95 cass, joystick only



Tynesoft have digitally captured five winter sports: ski jump, downhill ski-ing, the biathlon, slalom ski-ing, and bobsled.

From the preliminary options screen, up to six competitors enter their names and select the nation they wish to represent. After choosing the events they wish to take part in, the action begins.

Ski jumping begins with the player at the top of a 90m run. Pressing the fire button starts the 'birdman' on his high-speed descent. At the end of the ramp, the player launches his skier into the air, and keeps his skis horizontal through flight. The skier is awarded points for distance covered and style.



It's almost as if you're really there! David Vine, lots of cold white stuff, that famous tune, those jerky graphics . . . erk! Comparisons are bound to be made with Winter Games, **but** Winter Olympiad **comes nowhere near the slick Epyx standard of nearly three years ago.** Winter Olympiad **just goes to show that even decent graphics can't rescue a game if the animation and playability lack polish. Although there are plenty of events, none are particularly exciting, and it only takes a few plays for the action to become predictable. The** Solid Gold **compilation, complete with** Winter Games **and four other classics, is available at the same price . . .**



When playing Winter Olympiad, **it immediately strikes you how incredibly similar the presentation of three of the events are to their Epyx counterparts. However, they aren't as playable, and I tired of them surprisingly quickly. The slalom is very difficult, and the 3D isn't at all effective. It's a shame that the sprites and animation aren't up to the standard of the backdrops, because it would have added polish to an otherwise average sports simulation. I can't really recommend** Winter Olympiad, **especially if your software collection already includes the aforementioned Epyx classic.**

Next is downhill ski-ing, where the player negotiates a 3km tree-lined route in the fastest possible time. Hazards come in the form of logs and rocky outcrops, which are jumped over.

The biathlon, a tortuous test of marksmanship and stamina follows. With a rifle slung over his shoulder, the player makes a long trek across snowy landscapes and stops at checkpoints to shoot at targets. There are three checkpoints in all, which the competitor visits within the fastest possible time

Ski-ing makes its final appearance in the slalom event. Weaving left and right through the gates, the player must be sure to keep yellow flags on the right and brown flags on the left otherwise penalties are incurred and added on to the finishing time.

The final event places the player in a bullet-shaped bathtub inside a twisting 1.5km icy trench. This is the highly dangerous bob-sled, which involves guiding a sled as it rockets down the run at speeds in excess of 90 mph. A steady hand is required, otherwise it turns over and the race is lost.

As a bonus, Tynesoft are running a competition for Olympiad players, the first prize being a trip to the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, USA.



▶ **The view from the top of the ski-jump in Tynesoft's *Winter Olympiad***

PRESENTATION 76%
Very good on-screen presentation, but the multiload is slow and arduous.

GRAPHICS 72%
The backdrops are quite good, but sprites and animation are generally poor.

SOUND 68%
Plenty of tunes and jingles, but the emphasis is on quantity rather than quality.

HOOKABILITY 75%
Pretty straightforward, although the action is by no means thrilling.

LASTABILITY 58%
None of the events offer much in the way of challenge, and there's no compulsion to return for repeated plays.

OVERALL 66%
Fairly good, but Epyx's *Winter Games* is far classier.

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Gremlin's new logic game is set within the confines of an optical circuit, the completion of which is dependent upon the correct manipulation of a laser beam.

Each screen holds a laser generator and receiver, which must be connected by an unbroken beam of light. The beam is directed by a series of mirrors, some of which auto-rotate, but most can be turned manually by positioning a pulsing icon over them, holding down the fire button and moving the joystick.

Other equipment aids the path of the beam, such as a refractor which sends the beam out at a random angle, and fibre optics which transfer the beam from one part of the screen to another.

There are also obstructions, which detrimentally affect the path of the beam – the system overloads if the beam comes into contact with mines, absorbing blocks, is directed back along itself, or the beam length becomes too great. The extent of the overload is represented by a bar which expands as the laser overheats.

Each circuit can only be completed when all the grey cells have been destroyed, and a constant power drain imposes a time limit on the proceedings. A practice mode is included, allowing three screens to be played with a slow energy drain. This allows familiarisation with the action, and no score is recorded for the effort.



Arcade/puzzles games are all too rare, with Zenji, Split Personalities, and now Deflektor being the only notable examples of a sadly untapped genre. The gameplay is very straightforward, but incredibly engrossing – I was really surprised at how much concentration is required to deflect the beam around the screen without overheating the laser. My only reservation is that it becomes a little dull having to work all the way through lower screens to get to higher ones – a level select would be appreciated. Still, that's my only quibble. Deflektor is very enjoyable, and provides an original and worthwhile way to kill time.



The latest addition to the growing family of good Gremlin games, takes the theme of Rebel and improves on it tremendously. The gameplay is deceptively simple in appearance, but the screens are very well designed – there always appears to be just one cell that you can't reach! I enjoyed playing it for the first few times, but since the game progresses by screens, you tend to find yourself playing through the first ones time and time again like an automaton: they never change, so the method used is identical each play. I would have liked some password affair to allow you to access later screens, but this is really my only reservation. If you can handle this, then Deflektor is certainly a worthy purchase.



► **Something to reflect upon: Gremlin's unusual puzzle logic game**



Deflektor has a high level of presentation and pleasingly simple gameplay. Despite the apparent lack of difficulty, once you start ploughing through levels, the action becomes a total mind-bender, requiring great care, speed of thought and a good judgement of angles. On top of the clear (although very basic) graphics, the sound is high quality, with some tuneful title music and nice 'lasery' noises throughout. It seems that the revival of the good puzzle game is well and truly accomplished, with Tetris, and now Deflektor. For some highly entertaining action that's surprisingly captivating and a real departure from the normal blasting fare, try this out.

► **Things *do* tend to get slightly complex . . .**



PRESENTATION 70%
Comfortable control method, and the game is reasonably polished.

GRAPHICS 73%
The laser beam is effective, rapid and believable, while the screens are simple but adequate.

SOUND 80%
A tuneful Benn Daglish soundtrack, and some very suitable effects.

HOOKABILITY 82%
Easy to use, interesting to play and addictive.

LASTABILITY 75%
Plenty of circuits to attempt, although once completed a few times they may not represent such a strong lure.

OVERALL 81%
An excellent puzzle game requiring fast reflexes and logical thought.

TETRIS.

MIRROR Soft

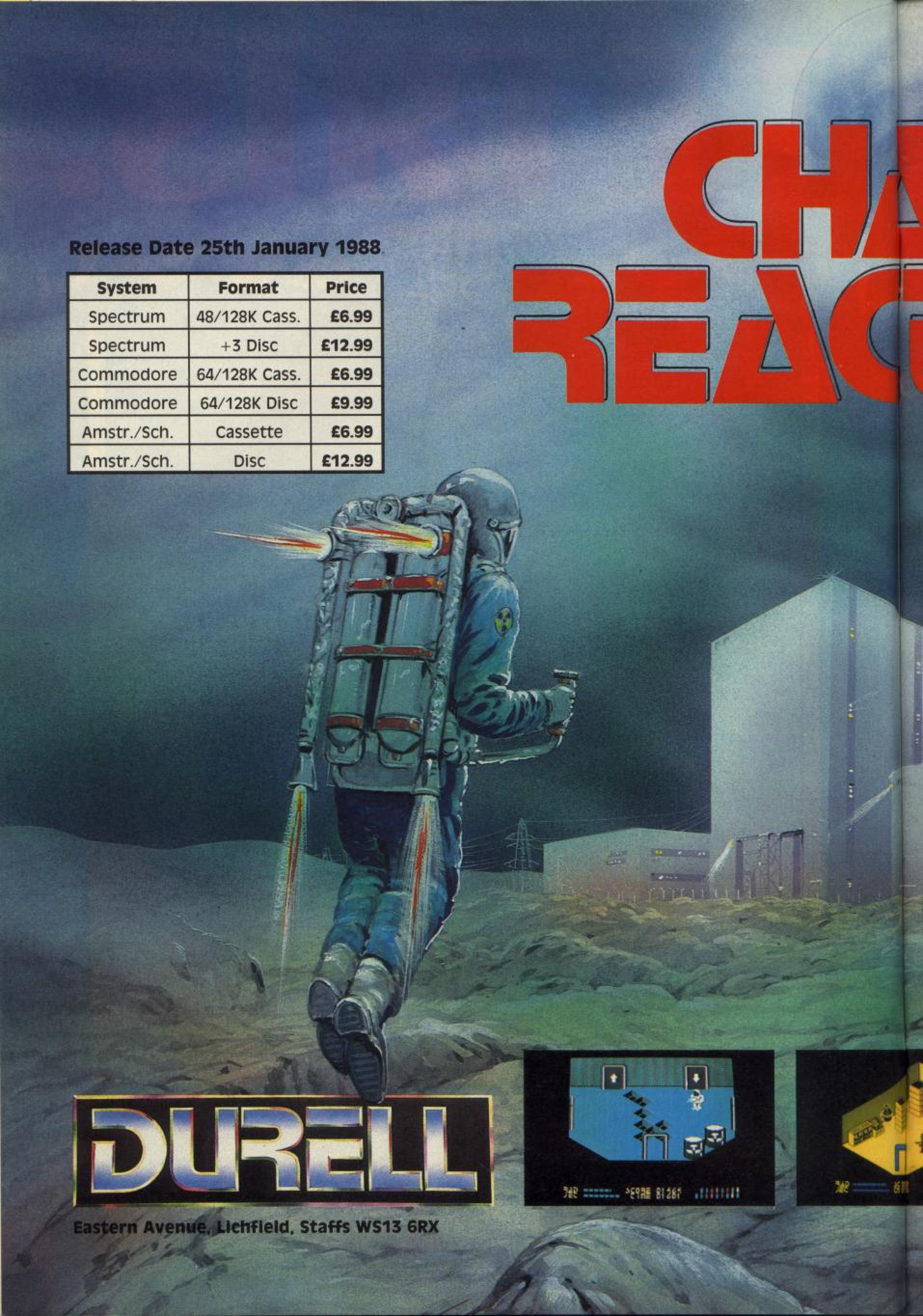


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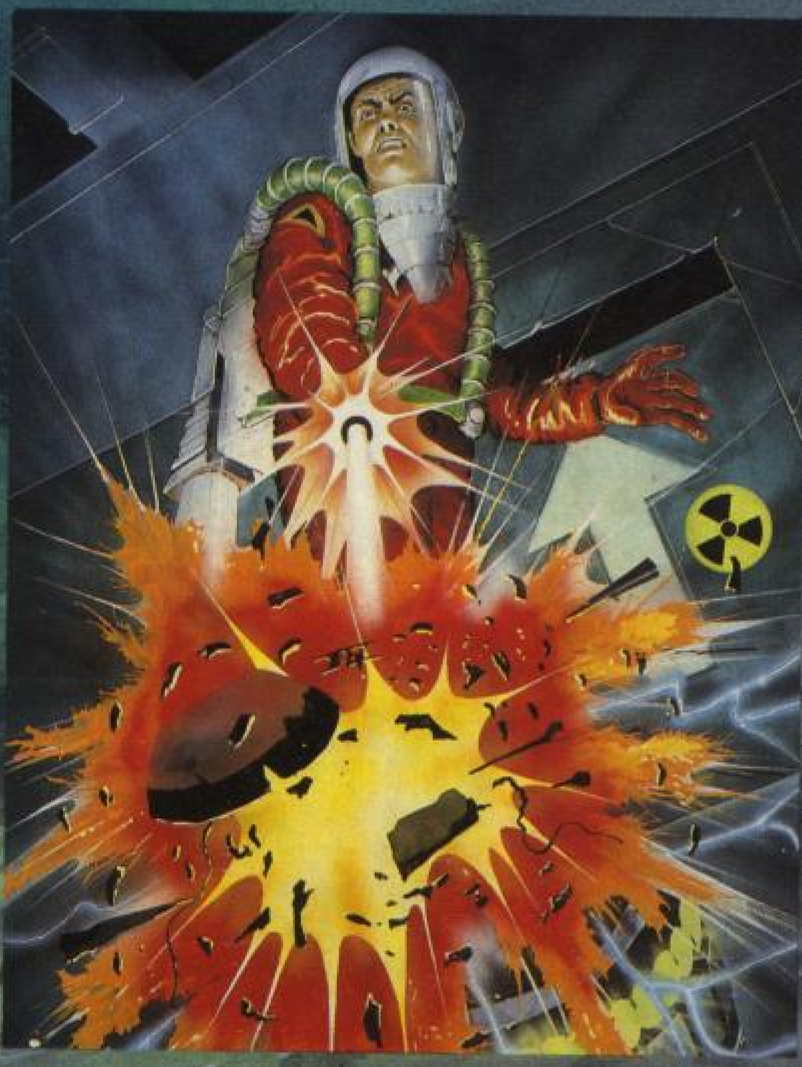
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BONE CRUNCHER

Superior Software, £9.95 cass, £11.95 disk, joystick only

Bono the dragon and his chum Fozzy live in a castle, and earn a crust by selling soap to monsters who bathe in the sea nearby.

Each of the castle's chambers is displayed from an overhead viewpoint and scrolls around as Bono tunnels from room to room. Soap is manufactured by collecting old skeleton bones which litter the castle and boiling them up in one of the many cauldrons.

Five skeletons are needed to produce a single bar of soap, which is then taken to a waiting monster, shown undertaking his ablutions. When five monsters are clean, Bono and his buddy enter the next chamber.

There are many hazards to avoid, including skeleton-eating spiders, and trapdoors – which are fatal to the touch – and glooks, which block Bono's path.

Superior have incorporated a password system which allows access to later chambers without having to replay previous levels.

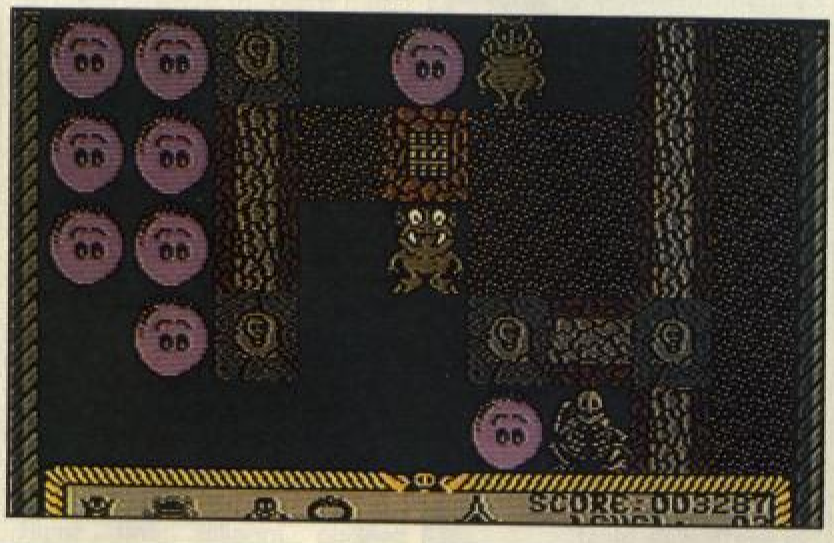


It seems that Superior Software's bread and butter products are all Boulderdash **look-a-likes.** Bone Cruncher **is set apart by the amusing speech, well-defined graphics and interesting title tune, but still the old format manages to shine through. Unlike** Boulderdash, Bone Cruncher **lacks the necessary frenetic elements, leaving the game unexciting. If you're a fan of the classic arcade-puzzle format, this is better than most. For me though, the magic is starting to fade.**



I could begin by remarking on the complete lack of original thought generated by Superior Software – but it's too late for that. Bone Cruncher **is simply a competent** Repton/Boulderdash **variant with one or two neat touches. The puzzles are entertaining and the game is very well presented, excepting the grotty scrolling. It's not a bad game, but I bet you've already got one just like this in your collection . . .**

► **Bono and Fozzy in a bit of soapy bubble**



PRESENTATION 88%
Good documentation and excellent in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 53%
Plain objects and backdrops, with humourous but limited animation on the main character.

SOUND 61%
Initial chorus of sampled speech and monster screams, followed by a repetitive Michael Winterberg ditty.

HOOKABILITY 64%
The game's aim is reasonably simple, and the first few problems are quite challenging.

LASTABILITY 49%
There are 22 moderately entertaining chambers to negotiate, although you may become bored long before the last.

OVERALL 56%
A polished, but merely average addition to an already jaded format.

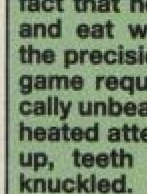
THROUGH THE TRAP DOOR

Piranha, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick with keys

Berk, Drutt and Boni have decided to journey further into the creepy domain of the Bad Tempered Thing by going through the Trap Door.

The player takes charge of both Drutt and Berk, and swaps between them by pressing the fire button. There are four regions to negotiate, and progress is made by solving a series of puzzles and avoiding the castle's less friendly inhabitants. Keys give access to later sections, and there are sweets and toadstools which are consumed to give Berk special characteristics.

Progress is made by using the two characters together, since the smaller Drutt can gain access to places that Berk cannot reach.

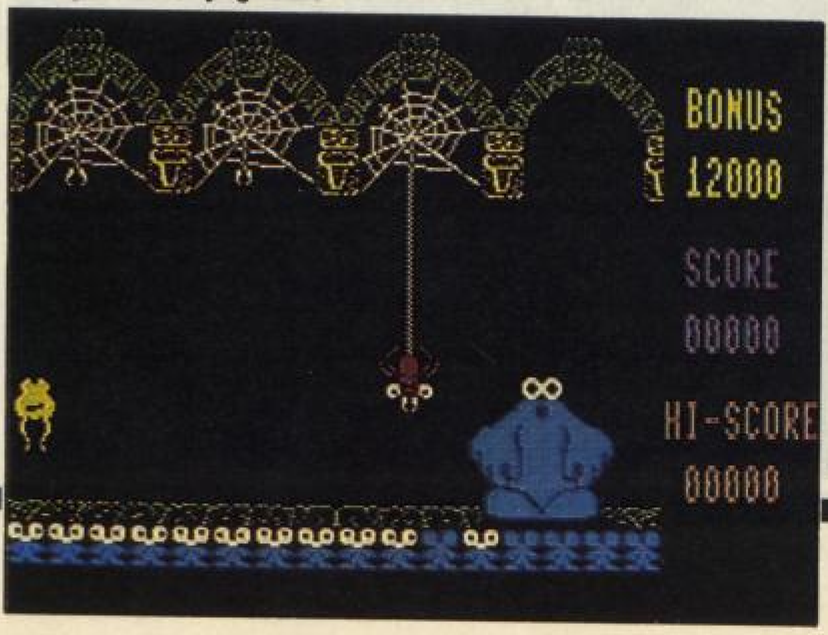


The characters are well presented and the graphics are splendid, but unfortunately the game itself is incredibly frustrating. Berk is unwieldy and Drutt is bordering on the uncontrollable: you're constantly battling the slow response time and the fact that he wants to rush off and eat worms! Considering the precision that most of the game requires, this is practically unbearable. After several heated attempts, I had to give up, teeth gritted and white knuckled. Even ice-cool Jaz smashed a joystick to bits in his frustration! Not recommended.



The player is given only 'partial' control – one of the characters wanders off by himself when he is supposedly under your control. There also appears to be a problem with the placement of the main characters – sometimes they stand on the floor, other times, a character square beneath. This makes some of the movement immensely difficult, and often leads to terminal joystick, keyboard, television and chair failure (depending on the level of frustration). Simply, don't buy this game – it's horrible.

► **The cute 'n' cuddly graphics of *Through the Trapdoor* belie the game's annoying nature**





PRESENTATION 68%
Poor instructions and reasonable in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 82%
Big and very nicely animated characters, but the backdrops are a little bland.

SOUND 32%
Poor effects throughout.

HOOKABILITY 45%
Frustrating control system provides a major hurdle to the first time player.

LASTABILITY 38%
There's plenty of game to be had, but the final solution is obscure and playing is more a question of endurance than enjoyment.

OVERALL 44%
A very disappointing sequel to *Trap Door*, and a difficult and unappealing game in its own right.

ZZAP! TEST

LIFEFORCE

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.94 disk, joystick or keys

An early transport project involved the production of nuclear fuelled Flexible Robot Caterpillars (FRC's) capable of moving people and heavy loads. Radical changes in Government saw the FRC project take on an increasingly military role. All went well until the FRC's malfunctioned and overran the capital . . .

Project 'Lifeforce' aims to recapture the city by sending a one-manned tank to destroy the FRC's and collect the valuable fuel rods from their nuclear reactors.

The fuel rods are stored in the FRC's heads, which are stopped by successively destroying the individual sections of their bodies. The remaining head unit becomes immobile, and the rod is picked up when driven over. When all eight fuel rods are safely stored aboard the tank, the player exits to the next, more difficult, level.

A variety of alien species inhabit the now-deserted city, which are blasted or avoided, since prolonged contact is detrimental to the tank's shields, finally resulting in its destruction.

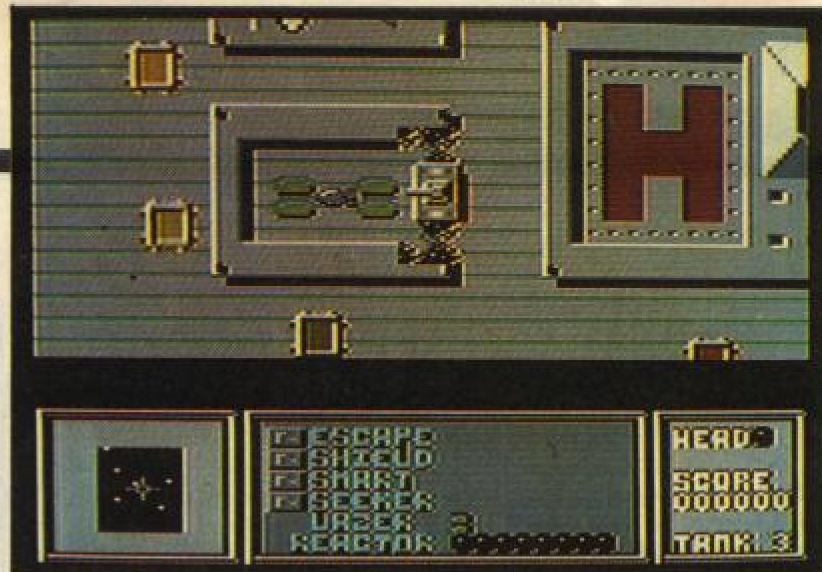
The tank boasts an impressive armoury, including lasers, heat-seeking missiles and smart bombs. Both the power cells for transport can be 'borrowed' . . .



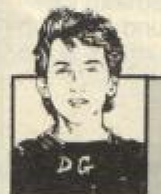
Although Lifeforce **is played at a rather plodding rate and isn't particularly polished, it manages to offer some entertainment. The bas-relief graphics backdrops are effective, but they're marred by the very jerky scrolling and a pretty poor-looking bunch of adversaries. Quite a bit of strategy is required to make safe passage through the city, and I don't think a little cartography would go amiss. If you enjoy blasting games which require thought as well as a fast trigger finger,** Lifeforce **could provide some, albeit limited, enjoyment.**



By all accounts, I shouldn't like Lifeforce. **The scrolling is poor, the control is awkward and often fiddly, and the tank is slow. Moving through the rubble of blasted walls sometimes proves difficult, and it's possible to get the tank momentarily 'trapped' due to the poor collision detection. This becomes really frustrating while under attack from aliens at the same time! Despite all this, I still found myself wanting to play. The radar provides a good source of tension, because if you don't constantly watch for the FRC's, one of them comes whizzing around the corner straight into you, ending the game, and blasting the swift-moving caterpillars is quite entertaining. Lasting appeal may not be all that hot, but** Lifeforce **provides a reasonably worthwhile blast.**



► **Some of the subtle bas-relief graphics on *Lifeforce***



Lifeforce **is nothing technically impressive, having distinctly average graphics and sound, but it is attractive for its unusual adversaries, and the seek-and-pick-up weapon system. This helps sustain the action as it requires continual attention to ensure weapons remain armed and working. However, the game is by no means a polished product and struggles to maintain interest over a long period – the creature you're trying to track down only appears on screen briefly and in between times the action is laboured. Not a wonderful game by any means, but there have been worse.**

FREDDY HARDEST

Imagine, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Galactic playboy, Freddy Hardest, has been on another binge! Tanked up with Dutch courage, he wants to take on the world – but space pilots shouldn't drink and fly. In an inebriate blur, Freddy crash-lands his ship on the planet Ternat, site of the aggressive Kaldar headquarters. With his ship destroyed, he's there to stay until alternative transport can be 'borrowed' . . .

The mission is split into two sections. In the first, Freddy makes his way to the Kaldar base across a horizontally scrolling landscape. Every step of the way is fraught with danger, and deadly creatures are dodged or blasted, and chasms jumped over. Freddy has five lives, and one is lost every time he falls foul of a hazard.

When the first section is completed, Freddy gains access to the next, which is loaded separately from tape. Here, our playboy hero attempts to steal one of four col-



Like its forerunners, Freddy Hardest **is difficult and frustrating – but unlike its predecessors, it is also dull and unrewarding. The first section comprises a laborious trek across a dull landscape. Control is tricky, and jumping over chasms requires pixel-perfect precision and a lot of luck. The second part is a poor man's V, with Freddy running around a boring and unexciting space station in search of items to help him escape. The action soon becomes tedious, and after a couple of sessions there's little urge to reload.** Freddy Hardest **offers nothing new or thrilling, and is very overpriced.**

► **Don't drink and fly: Freddy makes a partially subterranean landing on Ternat**





Knowing how difficult Imagine/Dinamic games are (Game Over **and** Army Moves**), I gave** Freddy Hardest **a chance. I played it a lot and tried to keep cool, but all to no avail. The game is presumably titled as such because of the three Dinamic games, this one is by far the most difficult. After many attempts, I could only get a couple of screens past the starting point. Basically, the game is poorly designed: leaping across hazards is fine, but when an alien literally appears out of nowhere just where you're going to land, the game takes on new dimensions in frustration. Jumping onto the moving platforms is also marred by the collision detection which sometimes allows Freddy to fall straight through the centre. AAARGH! Haven't Dinamic heard of playtesting? If you want to retain some semblance of sanity don't buy this.**

the shields and lasers plus the separate armaments are located within small rooms around the cityscape. These are collected by blasting the retaining walls and simply driving over the cannisters in question.

There are eight FRCs located around three parts of the city, and when all are destroyed, the mission is complete.

PRESENTATION 59%
Inconsistent documentation, unhelpful instructions and an annoying delay between goes.

GRAPHICS 56%
Chunky sprites and fair bas-relief backdrops, backed up with jerky scrolling.

SOUND 19%
Little else but white noise effects.

HOOKABILITY 65%
The slow and often awkward gameplay offers limited instant appeal.

LASTABILITY 44%
If you like the action, there are three tough levels to complete.

OVERALL 58%
A reasonably enjoyable blast and collect game.

our-coded spaceships from a multi-level underground complex. To activate a ship, Freddy finds the correct Captain's log, nuclear energy cells and hyperdrive instructions.

While making good his escape, Freddy also battles his way past the base's deadly inhabitants and a selection of their robotic guards – life is tough when you're a galactic playboy.

PRESENTATION 45%
Restart option, but there's a very long delay between games.

GRAPHICS 67%
Smart, but repetitive backdrops, and limited animation.

SOUND 49%
Dire title music, and the soundtrack and spot effects are merely adequate.

HOOKABILITY 52%
Very frustrating from the outset, and the urge to battle through the first section isn't strong.

LASTABILITY 35%
The action soon becomes repetitive, and the second section offers very limited enjoyment.

OVERALL 42%
A combination of two very poor games.

I, ALIEN

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Following a nuclear war on Earth, the entire livestock population has become prematurely extinct. In order to feed the remaining people, mankind travels the Galaxy in search of new sources of protein.

A small alien creature has been captured by one such Terran ship, but decides to flee in an attempt to reach an old escape pod deep within his home planet. Taking the role of the creature, the player battles his way through the starship, across the planet surface and finally into the sewer system, which leads him to the pod.

The alien begins his bid for freedom within the confines of the spaceship. The small animal negotiates the ship's complex series of corridors by moving from deck to deck using colour-coded teleports.

The ship is full of unfriendly beings, contact with whom reduces the alien's energy toward a fatal zero. Blasting the creatures results in different effects: some leave energy crystals behind which are collected to replenish lost energy, mutants drop acid flesh which is used for extra firepower and 'transmitters', which turn the alien green and reverse the controls.

Fellow prisoners are moved around the ship in 'trans-cells' – a harness which prevents escape. Contact with a trans-cell releases the prisoner, and if ten prisoners are freed, the alien is rewarded with an extra life. Care must be taken, however, since blasting the trans-cell also kills the captive.

A bomb has been planted in the ship to stop the alien's quest, which is reset before the countdown timer reaches zero. Once the reset panel is found, the alien is safe to seek out the exit to the next level.



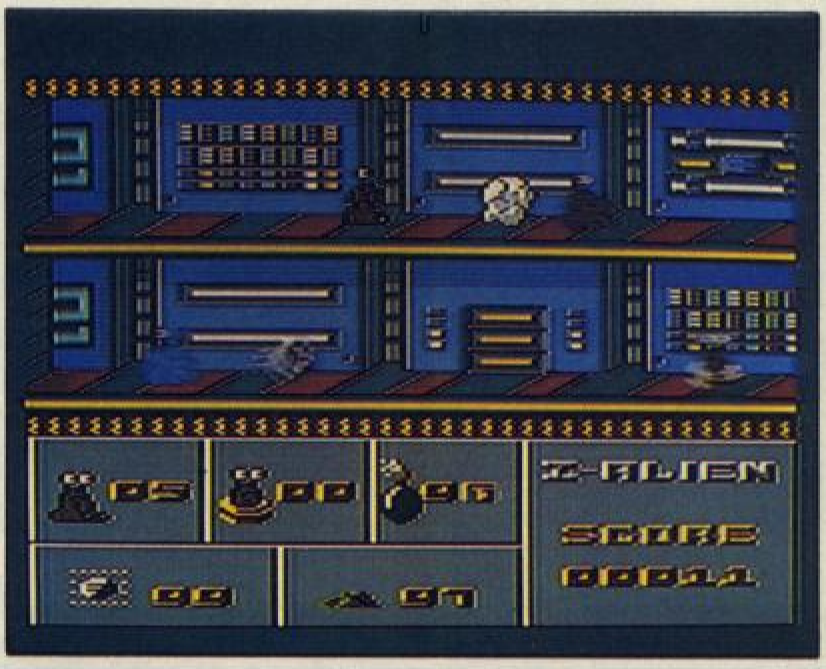
Ever since the advent of V, it has been in vogue to place arcade adventures on spaceships, with lots of laser blasting fun, death and mayhem. I, Alien is another in this line, and apart from some imaginative design and graphics it never reaches any heights of distinction. Play is fairly tricky, with different aliens affecting you in different ways, and accurate jumping and shooting is required much of the time. The additional threat of the bomb countdown as well as diminishing energy also adds to the game's difficulty, which starts at a fairly high level, anyway. The sound is pretty average, and overall the gameplay is nothing special. If you want to feel exactly the same before and after playing a game, buy this!



I was moderately entertained by I, Alien, although it can hardly be considered to represent any great advance in computer gaming. As arcade adventures go, it's fairly unusual and reasonably well produced. The backdrops are colourful without being too gaudy, while the sprites are neither obtrusive nor impressive. Progress is very much dependent on mapping, and not a small amount of dextrous play, since avoiding the hazards and creatures is pretty difficult (due in no small part to the finnicky collision detection). The instructions fail to fully explain the teleports, which actually allow access to more than one deck, and the exact manner of entering the next level remains a mystery, so if you do purchase – beware!



► The little ET attempts to waddle his way to safety



PRESENTATION 57%
The instructions are lacking, and apart from a restart there are no other options.

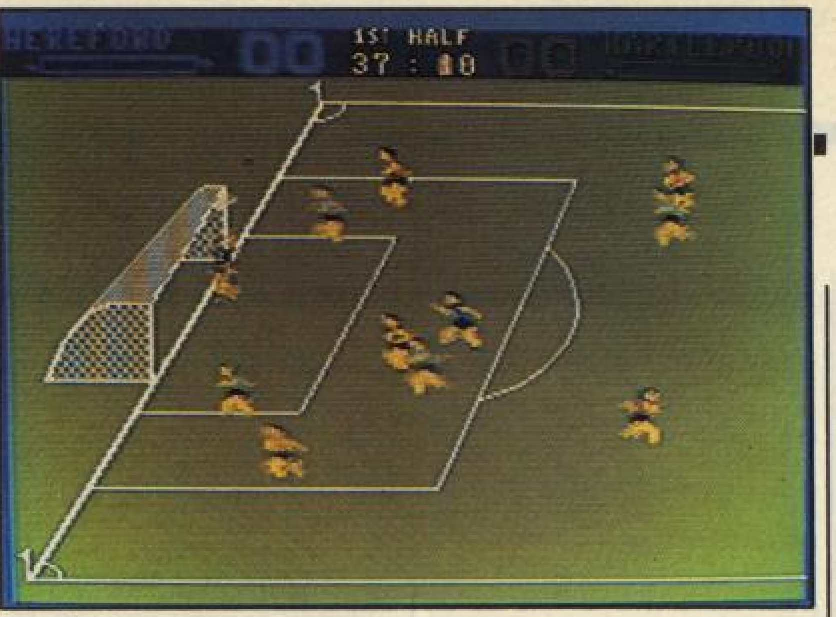
GRAPHICS 58%
Colourful backdrops with an array of fairly unimpressive sprites.

SOUND 46%
Tuneless title music, and a few squeaky sound effects during play.

HOOKABILITY 55%
Mapping is essential from the outset – a factor which might well put players off.

LASTABILITY 58%
The going is tough, and should provide a challenge for those who enjoy the action.

OVERALL 62%
An average and moderately entertaining arcade adventure.



▶ Gaz Lineker – England superstar, football prodigy and blobby yellow sprite

GARY LINEKER'S SUPERSTAR SOCCER

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

NOTE: The tape version has no league system or management screen, and only works as a stand-alone match player. When two teams are picked, the match is played repeatedly until the computer is reset.

In direct competition with Ocean's *Match Day II* comes Gremlin's latest big-name licence, *Superstar Soccer*. Similar to Mr Ritman's game, this gives the player the dual aspects of management and real playing action, but approaches them quite differently.

When the player starts, he sets up the league as he wishes, choosing his team name and whether there are seven or fifteen league games per season. He then examines his team, deciding whether to trade old players or recruit new ones, and arranges them in a six man formation.

The game is structured into four divisions of sixteen teams, with the player's team starting in the fourth, playing both league and cup games. Any of the four division tables can be examined, as well as any teams' statistics, set-up and list of players.

When the player starts a match, he can change the control of the coach, centre forward and goalie to human or computer. If all three are set to computer control, the player can elect not to watch the match, but just let the computer work out the result. The player may also pick team colours, set the speed of the timer (from normal to 15 times faster, for shorter games), and either practice or play league games.

The player only has one footballer to control for the whole match – the computer follows the action on the ball, which means that the player's centre can be a long way off screen. When the player has the ball, he can either pass, by holding the joystick towards a player and tapping the button, or shoot, by holding down the button. Shots can also be made if the ball is in the air, resulting in either a 'bicycle' kick or a header, depending on the height of the ball.

Whenever there is a break in play, such as a free kick or a goal, the coach can change team tactics for both defence and offence, making them either aggressive or passive. Substitutions can also be made, using the two allowed, to replace tired or injured players.



When I saw that this was from the makers of Superstar Ice Hockey, **I thought that it might be really good. The play is fast and furious, and the ball movement very convincing – but unfortunately there are many flaws which ruin a potentially brilliant game. The tape version is a real disappointment and is limited to just one match – you pick your teams and play. That's it – if you want to change teams, you switch off and reload. The disk version is better and has many options, including league tables and cup competitions. The big drawback is that the game is far too easy – it takes little practice to beat the toughest teams. Consequently lasting appeal is limited, and winning everything on the disk version soon becomes dull. There are two choices of football games this month – personally I think** Match Day II **is the better one.**



At last, a couple of software houses are starting to produce soccer games that are approaching International Soccer**'s five year old standard. Gary's** is **the more playable of the two, being immensely quicker and having far more goals to keep the action exciting. Unfortunately, it also suffers from a lack of realism, partly derived from the unlikely score lines (27-22), partly from the 'unusual' rules (if the goalie holds the ball too long, the other side wins a corner), and partly from the sometimes frustrating control method. Aside from this, the game has a good 'feel' to it, and is great fun to play, much of the game design obviously coming from Mindscape's earlier success,** Ice Hockey **(they were responsible for this game before it gained the big licence). Overall, just as enjoyable as *Matchday II*, but in a very different way.**

DISK VERSION

PRESENTATION 80%
Very detailed, with an easy-to-use management system. Lengthy loading periods and unrealistic scores detract from its authenticity.

GRAPHICS 76%
Realistic ball movement and very fast play give the graphics a convincing look.

SOUND 51%
No tunes, but some nice effects.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Very easy and enjoyable to play, with depth, action and goals to keep you going.

LASTABILITY 60%
An extensive league and cup system should keep you busy, but eventually play becomes repetitive.

OVERALL 74%
A pleasant and well-produced football game that is very playable, even if it isn't that true-to-life.

TAPE VERSION

PRESENTATION 59%
The instructions fail to mention the one-match-only game structure, but otherwise the presentation is acceptable.

GRAPHICS 76%
Realistic ball movement and very fast play give the graphics a convincing look.

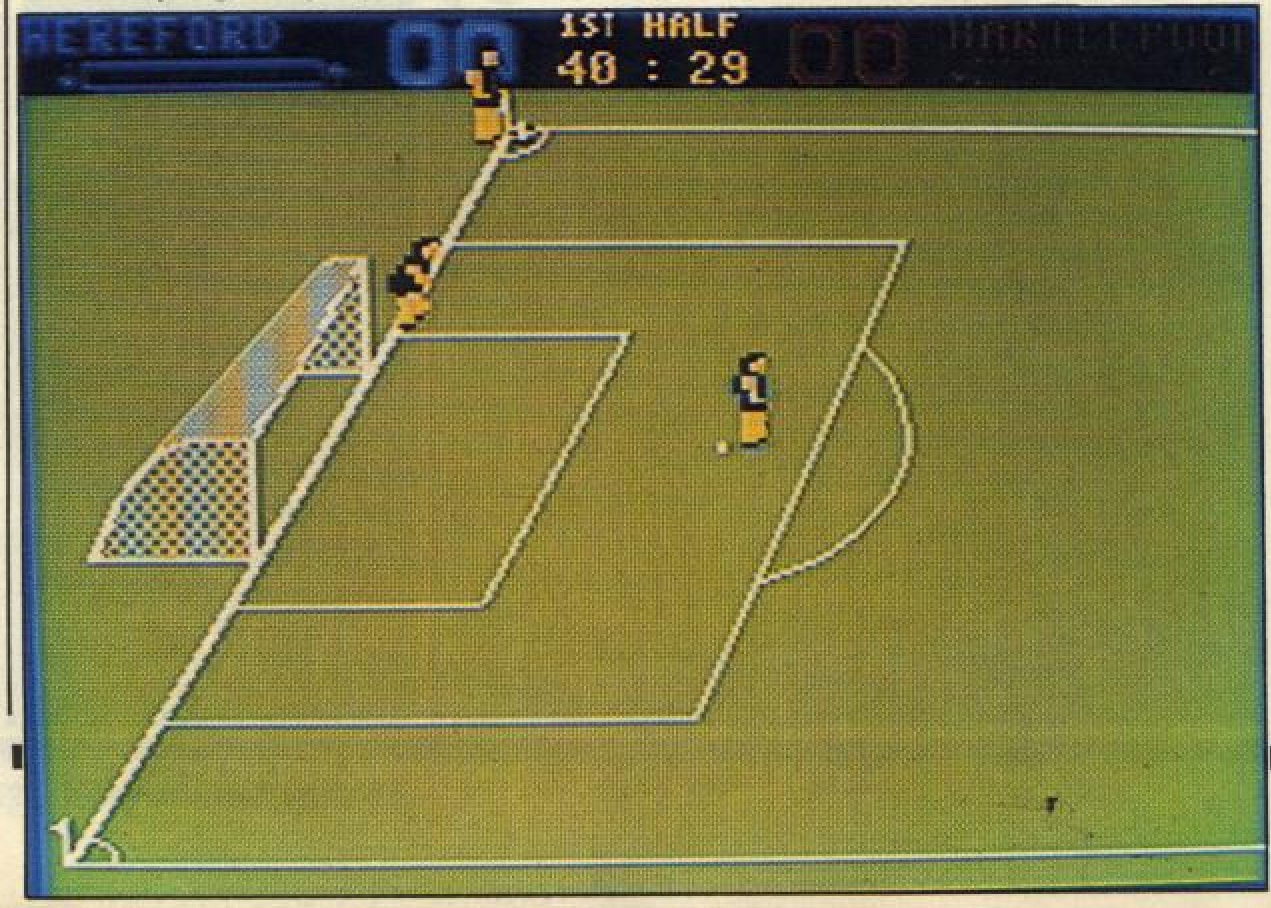
SOUND 51%
No tunes, but some nice effects.

HOOKABILITY 82%
Very easy and enjoyable to play, with plenty of action and goals to keep you going.

LASTABILITY 47%
Only one match can be played at a time, and even though the action is enjoyable, the novelty of winning soon wears off.

OVERALL 58%
A very limited version of the disk game, lacking an on-going campaign.

▶ The only thing missing is a pitch invasion . . .




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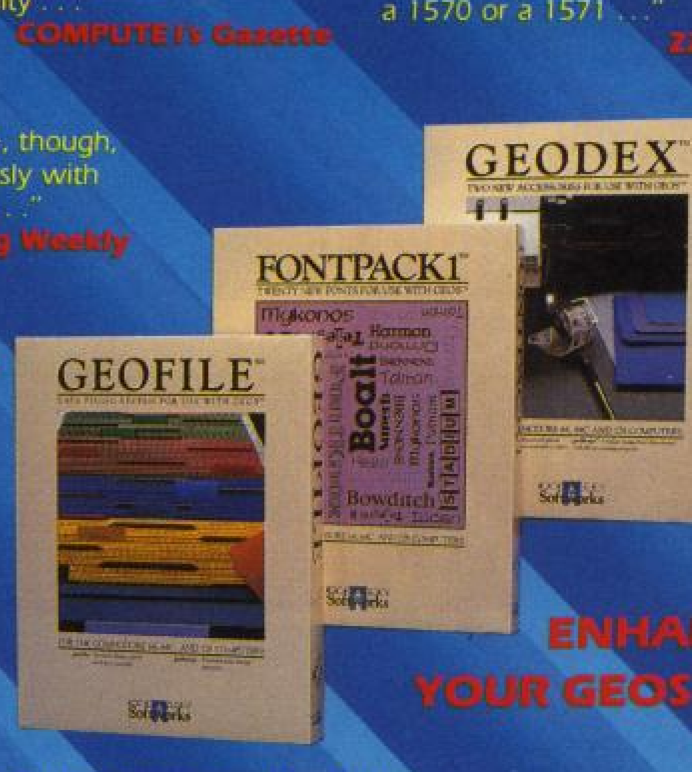
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ZZAP! RRAP

Another New Year and another bulging post bag! 1988 kicks off with complaints, moans, groans, questions and answers . . . Just like any other year, really. I must say though, that there's a marked improvement in the quality of this month's letters, and I've decided to award a £30 software voucher to the best. I hope things improve even further . . .

MAGS AS A PUBLIC SERVICE

Dear Lloyd,
I read with great interest the collection of complaints against the idea of a budget game 'ghetto' in Issue 32. The extracts from these letters were fair enough, and maybe some deserving low-price games should receive the full feature review. However, LM's reply startled me and forced me to sit up and think (for once).

It is indeed important that we readers fully understand the important role advertisers play in a magazine's life. The existing £1.25 price tag is, in my view, just right. However, this whole idea of the demise of the computer 'mag' raises an even greater issue.

Today's society, especially in Britain, is governed by market forces. Emphasis is now placed more than ever on capital. Many would argue that this has led to a neglect and even contempt for services to the public. Certainly Bruce Everiss' comment that 'mags will hardly be missed' is ominous. As far as I'm concerned Bruce can speak only for the company. He seems to hate the idea of computer magazines sorting out bad apples from the good in the monthly barrel of computer software. If this is so then Bruce has congratulated ZZAP! in doing what it set out to do, ie in providing an entertaining but scrutinising service. It is important for all of us to defend this service, or at least understand the pressures it undergoes.

Certainly Bruce Everiss's comment should not go unheeded. We have been warned!!!

Raymond Devlin, Aberystwyth, Dyfed

I'm glad my remarks have found some sympathetic consideration, as they were well-meant and definitely serious. In the past, both ZZAP! and CRASH have been gently accused by pundits of introducing to the reader behind-the-scenes matters that are traditionally thought to be 'trade secrets'. I can't see the point in that attitude, since we all live in, play in and eat because of the industry ZZAP! represents. The advertiser as well as the reader is important, but it is the reader who buys both the product and the magazine, and so deserves to know, in general, how things work.

For your sensible words, I've decided to award you the prize of £30 of software. Think long and choose wisely . . .

LM

FROM BRAZIL

Dear Lloyd,
Your magazine has been on sale in Brazil since December 1986. Before that we only had American magazines, and the arrival of ZZAP! shed a new light on CBM 64 entertainment. For the first time we had before us all the glory of British production. Since then we wait anxiously the arrival of each monthly issue. But we have some complaints. Why does ZZAP! take so long to get here? We bought the October issue yesterday. Why do so many British games not run on the American machine?

We started pooling together our allowances and we sent for British games. It was rather disappointing. Most of the games did not work on the American machine. Of course, we sent back the games and were reimbursed. But we were not interested in getting back our money. We wanted the games. Why do some games not run on the American machines and others do? We heard lots of explanations: it is because differences in colour system or the electricity supply. Okay? But why do some games work perfectly?

We hope British software houses will produce games to be played worldwide and not only in Europe or will at least print a small notice 'not compatible with non-European machines'.

Congratulations on your wonderful magazine. Keep up the good work and let us know what can be done about our complaints.

Brazilian 64 Amigos, Sa Paulo, Brazil

I'm not sure, but I expect your electricity supply is similar to that in the United States, running at 60 hertz (Britain's runs at 50 hertz) and this can make a difference to some aspects of the way a program runs. But the major difference will probably be the screen handling routines which are designed to be compatible with the European TV standard PAL, whereas you are likely to have the American NTSC standard. What it means is that you should purchase British software that has been sold to the States rather than direct from Britain (although some software houses may well be able to help you out by providing the correct standard of software).

LM



ZZAP! RRAP

THE GOOD POINT TO BUGS

Dear Lloyd,
Only when something really angers me, or causes me to feel it is worthy of comment do I ever put pen to paper. So what has caused me to write to you now? Well, the answer is simple: *Super Sprint*.

I bought the game before ZZAP! reviewed it, which is an unusual occurrence since I find ZZAP! reviews usually reflect what I personally feel about a game. In this case, I'm glad I bought the game before the review because I never would have after reading it. This may sound as if I'm about to criticise the review, but I'm not, because once again I found it 100% accurate. *Super Sprint* is an enjoyable game, so what's my problem? My problem is the bugs.

I and many others like me dabble in machine code. If there's a major gameplay-affecting bug in a section of code I write, it is re-examined. If I cannot discover the bug's cause, I scrap that particular section of code and rewrite it. When the program works, I, as do most programmers – amateur or professional – feel a pride in my work. If programmers do not put their heart into a program and feel this pride when it works, they should not be programming, as the end result will inevitably be sloppy.

If the program is intended for release, the purchaser has a right to expect a well-programmed effort at least. If it is not programmed well and thoroughly playtested it should never be released. How can Electric Dreams justify releasing *Super Sprint* when it has so many obvious major bugs affecting its gameplay?

Okay, I realise there are deadlines, but most, if not all of the errors in the game are easily correctable within a week. I'm sure the public would readily wait that long. For example, after completion of the first track in a new game, you may obtain super traction level one without collecting any spanners. Not exactly a major bug, but an annoyance and a needless one at that. Surely, the location holding the number of spanners collected could be cleared at the beginning of a new game. Do this and bingo, no bug – and all in approximately two minutes.

If a shop sells faulty goods we have a right to replacement. The same should apply to software houses. *Super Sprint* has so many major bugs that it is faulty. Electric Dreams should take the time to fix the bugs and offer all buyers a bug-free replacement.

However, when all is said and done, the game *is* enjoyable, even bugged, and that is the biggest crime of all. What a pity that the programmers, who are so obviously competent, and the software house didn't take the trouble to eradicate the errors instead of wasting their time and effort by releasing a second-rate program. A bit of extra work and the game would have been not only enjoyable but playable. The buyers would be happier, the programmers prouder and, very probably, the software house richer – yet all this is lost because of one week.

Finally, I'd just like to say that there's a good point to programs like these, it makes us appreciate all the more, the attention programmers like Andrew Braybrook and Jeff Minter so obviously lavish on their work. They really enjoy what they do, and this becomes very apparent in their games and sets them way ahead of so many others.

Keith McLeman, Fraserburgh, Scotland

At least you have looked at the problem in a positive way which is refreshing to see. The bugs in Super Sprint *really are almost an oddity these days, and they must have let the program's sales down badly.*

LM

A ZZAP! RAP

Yo Zzappers and Co,
I made up this rap to let ya know,
That us budget players will never go.
The way that the big houses make us pay
Ten quid is a rip off, that's what I say.

Arcade licences and film tie-ins
Just kick the programmers in the shins,
Their standards are too low, they need a lift,
Originality will give them a shift.

Mastertronic, Firebird have set the groove
So let's see the bigger ones make a move.
Lower the prices by a fiver or more,
Ten pound games should be against the law.

I hope this rap has gone to heart,
Come on you giants, make a start,
It's not fair to make us kids spend,
Our hard earned cash in the end.

Great mag, keep it up.

Guy Cooper, Andover, Hants

Spending money isn't fair?!
But surely, for that it's there.
And originality costs a price,
You can't get quality in a trice.
To top it off it's outlets that matter
And in garages and newsagents the fatter
Are the names you mention above
Who work with those places hand-in-glove
To keep the others out of the heap
And force their prices to be less than cheap.
Mine isn't as good as yours, Guy, but I haven't got the time!

LM

A PRICE TOO MUCH

Dear Lloyd,
I have just bought issue 32 of ZZAP! 64, maintaining a complete collection of ZZAP's.

I thought that the £1.25 price tag on issue 31 was to pay for the 3D glasses, but this is clearly not the case, as issue 32 is priced the same.

How can you justify an increase in price of 25% when inflation is running at less than 4%. My pocket money has not gone up 25%, and reluctantly I have now to consider whether ZZAP! 64 can justify a place in my budget.

I'm sure that many readers would agree with my comment so how about a rethink on your pricing policy? (Perhaps a 10% increase would get by).

J Mainwood, Colchester, Essex

For a start, of the cost of inflation has been running recently at above 4%, and the previous year somewhat higher. The £1 price of ZZAP! was maintained for two years and with the general readjustments allowing for salary increases (which don't run at 4%) represents a price increase in the order of 16%. Looking at inflation gives a false perspective, however, for in the same time there have been four increases in paper prices of between 5% and 8% each time. Added to this, the cost to advertisers of buying space in ZZAP! (and other magazines) increases in price proportionately to circulation and hardly ever to inflation, so each page in real terms only brings in as much as it used to three years ago. As you can see, the matter isn't quite so simple as it looks. And on top of that, due to popular pressure, we made ZZAP! virtually full-colour throughout, which you don't find in many other comparable magazines. Overall, and in comparison with magazines in any field, I think you are still getting good value from ZZAP! from the cover price – and I wouldn't be too sure that you won't see price increases from other publishers before much longer.

LM



HOW DO YOU RATE

Dear Lloyd,
I've been an avid reader of ZZAP! for well over a year now. I don't actually buy it, my brother does, as he owns a 64 not me. I do however buy software for said 64 and as such I refer to read ZZAP! so as not to waste my money; it serves the purpose for separating the wheat from the chaff excellently. I'd recommend it to any games buyer owning a 64.

It has however a few faults (in my opinion). Although the reviews serve their purpose very well, the lack of consistency in them is most annoying. The marks you dish out for presentation, graphics, sound, hookability and lastability in most cases have nothing whatsoever to do with the overall mark, upon which you base your ratings of GM, SM, Sizzler or whatever. I will elaborate. Take for example *Buggy Boy*, awarded 97% overall and hence a Gold Medal in December ZZAP! How did you come to give it this esteemed mark?

Did you find the mean mark of the five preliminary ones (which would give 87.5%)? Perhaps you found the median mark. Perhaps you even disregarded the other marks, and pulled the Gold Medal mark out of the top of your hats . . .

Richard Handley, Stapleford, Notts.

I'd better let Julian explain . . .

LM

Each mark is independent of one another. This is what we take into consideration with each rating . . .
PRESENTATION*: Packaging, printed instructions, on-screen instructions, loading, play options, program facilities (including things like ease of joystick or keyboard control), on-screen impression – everything except the game itself.*
GRAPHICS*: Variety, detail and effectiveness of screen pictures, quality of animation, smoothness of movement.*
SOUND*: Variety and effectiveness of sound effects, quality both technically and aesthetically of music. Also: does sound annoy, and does it suit the action.*
HOOKABILITY*: How strongly does the game make you want to play it and keep playing it?*
LASTABILITY*: How long will it keep its hold on you?*
OVERALL*: This is IT! What the reviewers think in general. An overall mark takes the GAME into consideration. If it's enjoyable and entertaining, it deserves a high mark, regardless of its graphics, sound or presentation. A game might have the most superb sound and graphics ever, but if it's tedious and dull it won't be marked highly.*
HOW TO USE THE RATINGS*: Most importantly, you must realise that ratings are only a guide, important in the context of the review itself, but secondary to what is written. Of the ratings, some are more important than others as a buying consideration. PRESENTATION is only of moderate importance, for instance, but you may have your own set of criteria in judging what we say. The ratings are arrived at with discussion among the reviewers, and of course the results cannot be considered as infallible – the reviewers are only human (at least they think so), and sometimes there is a radical disagreement which inevitably affects the way the ratings come out.*

I hope that's cleared up the marking system. Marks HAVE to be awarded independently, otherwise a brilliant game could well be penalised for not being technically competent all round – Tetris *for example.* Buggy Boy *was considered to be a superb GAME – hence its high overall mark.*

JR

THE FRIENDLY INDEPENDENT

Dear Lloyd,
In reply to Ian Baker's letter of Issue 31 regarding his disk dilemma, I write to put forward a comment from the retail point of view.

The proportion of disk-to-cassette sales is approximately one in 500. We hold stocks of between 15 and 20 games on disk at any one time. Further more any titles not in stock can usually be obtained by any independent retailer within two to three days.

Generally, independents offer facilities to view games before buying. Surely extra customer service like this is preferable to the off-hand disinterest of a bored Boots assistant?

Moral: Go to your independent local dealer for a better-all-round friendly service.

Tim Swift, Macclesfield, Cheshire

There's little argument that chain stores major on the best-seller lists, whatever the object being sold, and that it's independents who provide the best general coverage of product.

LM

THE BEST PREDATOR

Dear Lloyd,
This has got next to nothing to do with Computers, but is worth printing I hope. I've just read Issue 32, which is the peak ZZAP! will ever reach. Why do I praise it so highly? Because I'm an Arnold Schwarzenegger worshipper, and the article on *Predator* was excellent. I had known about the film since around March, but of all the articles on it, yours was the most interesting to read. Was it faultless? No! Look really hard and you'll see that Big Arnie's first film was *Hercules In New York*, not *Pumping Iron*. One, possibly two, dates wrong. The first, *Raw Deal*, which I felt was better than you said, was made and released in 1986 not 87, and I always thought *The Terminator* was made in 1983 or 84, whichever, it was definitely made before *Conan The Destroyer*. Hope you can sort out these mistakes.

Yours, Lee Ricketts

PS I'm surprised that no software companies has licensed the film *The Terminator*. It would make a great game, I'm sure you agree. How about it, software companies of Britain?

Copyright dates on films can often be confusing – take the videos of Thames Television's World At War *series where the copyright states 1980/81; but don't believe it, the series was first transmitted in 1974!*

Conan The Barbarian *was made in 1981, but the sequel,* Conan The Destroyer *was actually made in the same year as* The Terminator *– both 1984. My source, when my memory misleads, is* Halliwell's Film Guide. *And yes,* The Terminator *would make a great game.*

LM

OUTWEIGHING THE GOOD

Dear Lloyd,
Despite agreeing with most of what Paul Coleman said in his Letter Of The Month (Issue 32), I can't help feeling that his allegation 'the good outweighs the bad' (re: software) might be a inaccurate.

If there's one thing I've learned, having had my 64 for three years, (and it's certainly not machine code) is that the majority of software is not very good at all. I'd say that only a third (if that) of software released is worth the money asked for it. Before the statisticians out there dive for their calculators and start leafing through a mound of ZZAP!s, I'd point out that review magazines are not really a representative sample. There are loads of games slipped out into the market without being reviewed, most of which are not exactly Sizzler material (which may explain why the software houses don't send them for review). I'm not sure what percentage of games released ZZAP! gets to review: do you know, Lloyd?

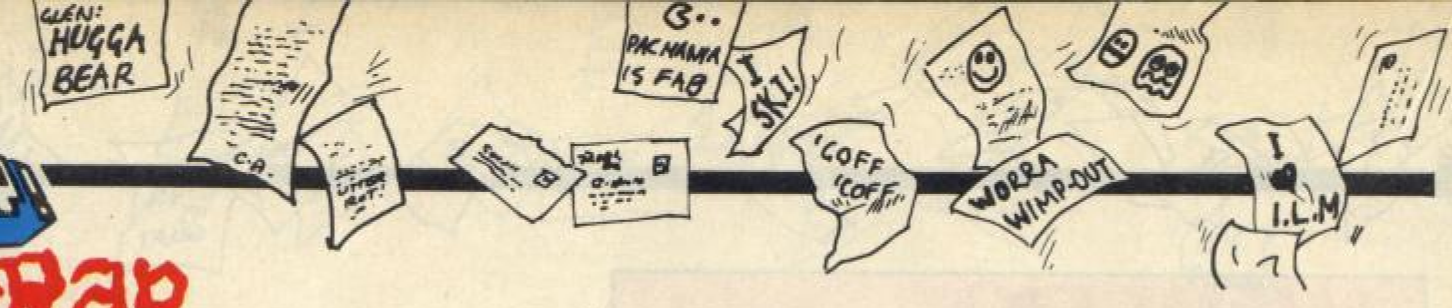
Also Paul, I don't think the software industry would collapse as a result of your somewhat iffy supposition: as indeed, it has not. There aren't many companies releasing sub-standard games alone, and the low costs of those that do usually keep them alive. The situation is rather that the large companies (like Ocean, US Gold and Activision) which release several very good games in a year, also slip out a lot of rubbish. They can get away with this because of their high revenue and good reputation resulting from the few very good games. The companies I admire are those who try to release quality products only, like Hewson and Thalamus for instance.

By the way, very glad to see three Gold Medals and four Sizzlers in ZZAP! 32 - things may be picking up.

Adrian Lowery, Chorley, Lancs

Whilst not attempting to create an excuse, I'd suggest that in any medium poorer product outweighs the good; novels for instance – thousands a year are published, and few are excellent (personal taste notwithstanding); records – again, thousands a year are published but few are chosen. That does not necessarily mean the medium is bankrupt of quality or originality, but it does mean the purchaser has to be as selective as possible. Charts are no indication of either, merely of financial success, often based on clever marketing or reflective of price. Budget games often overtop full-priced games in sales, but not because they're any better, but because they're cheaper. We're all as bad as each other really, and we're taken in by clever marketing hype, just as much are we fooled by low prices – the only difference being that one is less annoyed by wasting two quid than ten. Perhaps the worst crime of all is to become so cynical about the state of affairs that we just give up on software altogether.

LM



ZZAP! RRAP

PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS

Daniel Inman of 16 Melville Hall, Holly Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9NJ would like a penpal of any age.

Russell King of 134 Stornoway Road, Castle Vale, Birmingham, B35 6NH is 12 years, has an excellent software collection and would like to write to anyone.

Jouni Mannonen, Kiertokatu 3, 21200 Raisio, Finland is 13 years old and would like a penpal of any age from any part of the world. He promises to answer all letters.

Stephen Harcourt, 139 Pennymead, Harlow, Essex, CM20 3JB is 14 years old and wants a penpal who owns a C64, Amiga, Atari ST, or a C16. He also likes Heavy Metal.

Tony Vella of 14 Greenmeadow Drive, Parc Seymour, Penhow, Newport, Gwent wants to write to anyone who owns a C64, and would like to swap hints and tips.

Gaz!, 93 Crook Lane, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 3DN wants to write to someone who's interested in the newest disk 'stuff' for the C64.

David Harker, 3 Grangefields, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, ST8 7SA is looking for an Amiga-owning penpal from anywhere in the world.

Aidan Donnelly, 26 Woodley Park, Kilmacud, Dublin 14 is 14 and would like a penpal from any part of Europe. He has a C64, is interested in role-playing and PBM and promises to reply to all letters.

Peter Chaffe, Kitchener, D.Y.R.M.S, Dover, CT15 5ED is 12 years old and would like to write of around his own age.

Mike Thompson, 30 Risley Way, Carine, Western Australia, 6020 says he is itching to begin writing to a new penpal.

Mark Doyle, 23 Morris Croft, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, B36 9JN would like a female penpal, preferably from America or any other part of the world, but not from Great Britain.

Tim Molbaek, Sportaenget 1, 9230 Svenstrup J, Denmark, would like a penpal from any part of the world who wants to exchange tips, maps and games.

Lyman Cutler Green Jr, R.R. #1, Box 228, Dayville, Ct, 06241, USA is 17 years old and would like to write to a 64 user in Great Britain.

John Welsh, 14 Cuikenburn, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0JG would like to write to anyone who owns a C64.

Terje Carlsson, Alustorpsv.16, 52200 Tidaholm, Sweden is 13 years old and would like lots of penpals who own Commodores – so get writing.

Ioan Evans, 30 Heol Pen-Y-Scallen, Loughor, Swansea, West Glamorgan, SA4 2SE is 14 years old and likes rugby, cycling and canoeing, and he also has a mass of up-to-date games.

Andrew Bennet, 33 St. Annes Drive, Aylestone, Leicester, LE2 8HU is 13 years old and would like a penpal between the age of 12 and 15 of any sex or nationality.

Martyn Ball, 462 Clifton Drive North, St. Annes, Lancashire, FY8 2PP is 13 years old and promises to reply to everyone who writes to him.

Joe Kowalewski, 417 Hermitage Street, Philadelphia, PA 19128, USA would like to write to someone who is interested in swapping purchased games.

Patrick Cairnes, 24 Donoghue Cottages, Halley Street, London, E14 7SH would like to write to female 64 owners between the age of 16 and 18.

PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS ● PENPALS

Nikolaj Thomsen, Fuglevangsvej 33, 3060 Espergaerde, Denmark, is 14 and owns a Commodore with a disk drive and would like a penpal who enjoys roleplaying and making demos.

Mark Atkinson, 5 Penryn Avenue, Laffak, St Helens, Merseyside, WA11 9EX would like to write to anyone who wants to swap hints and tips.

Mark Picken, 39 Verner Street, Featherstone, West Yorkshire, WF7 5PD wants a male or female penpal anywhere in Great Britain.

Mark Corder, 42 Byron Avenue, Brynteg Parc, Beddan, Pontypridd, Mid Glam, CF38 2TW would like to write to someone who enjoys programming as well as playing games.

Mika Nieminen, Puolukkakuja 7 A 9, 40340 Jyaskyla, Finland would like a penpal from any part of the world who would like to swap hints, tips etc.

That wraps up another month. I'm off to start preparing the garden for the summer – that's if there IS a summer. In the meantime, if you feel an urge to air your views, send your letter to LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. See you at the pictures.

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ZZAP! COMP

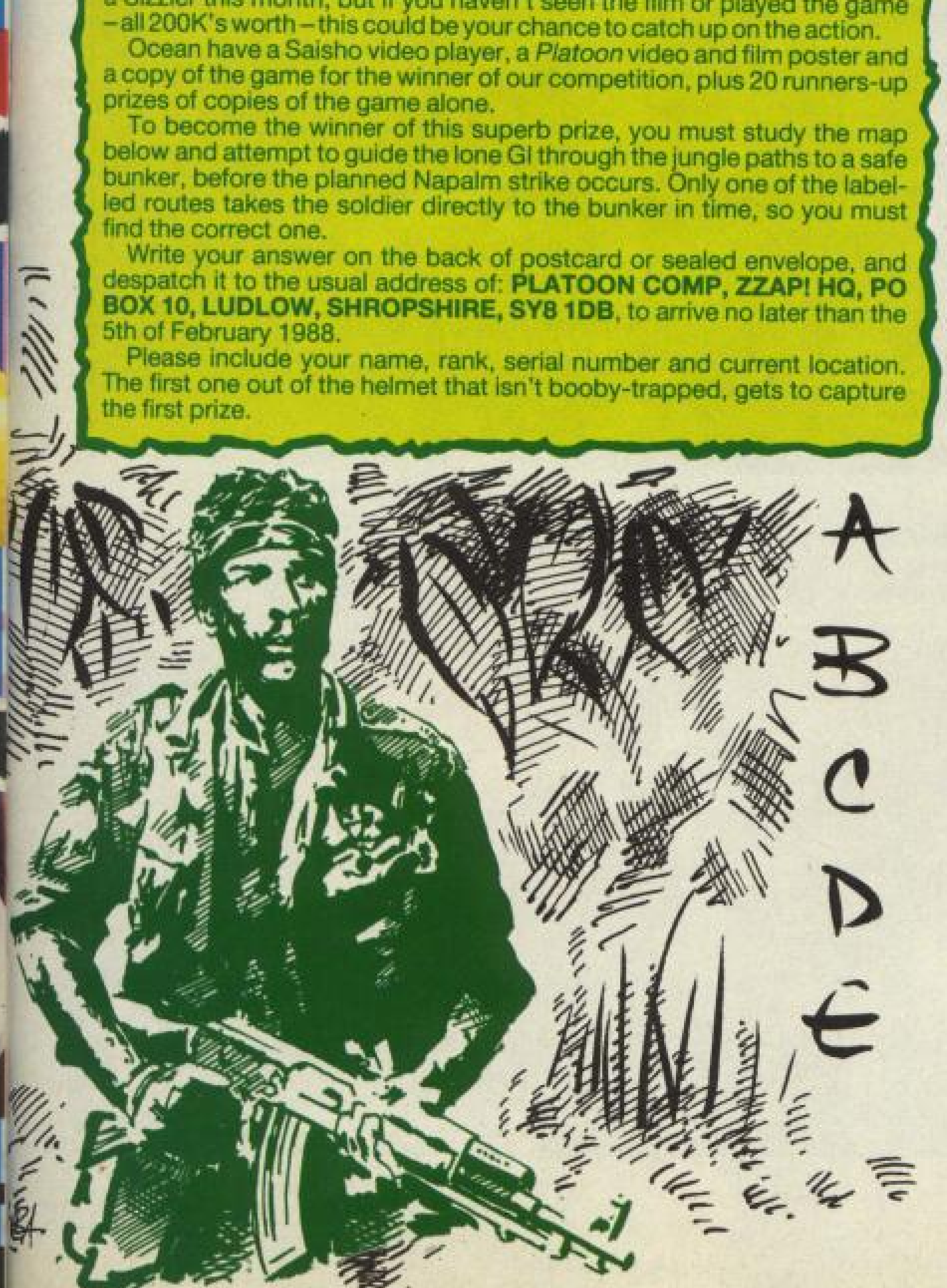
Ocean's brilliant computer version of the film, Platoon, has earned itself a Sizzler this month, but if you haven't seen the film or played the game – all 200K's worth – this could be your chance to catch up on the action.

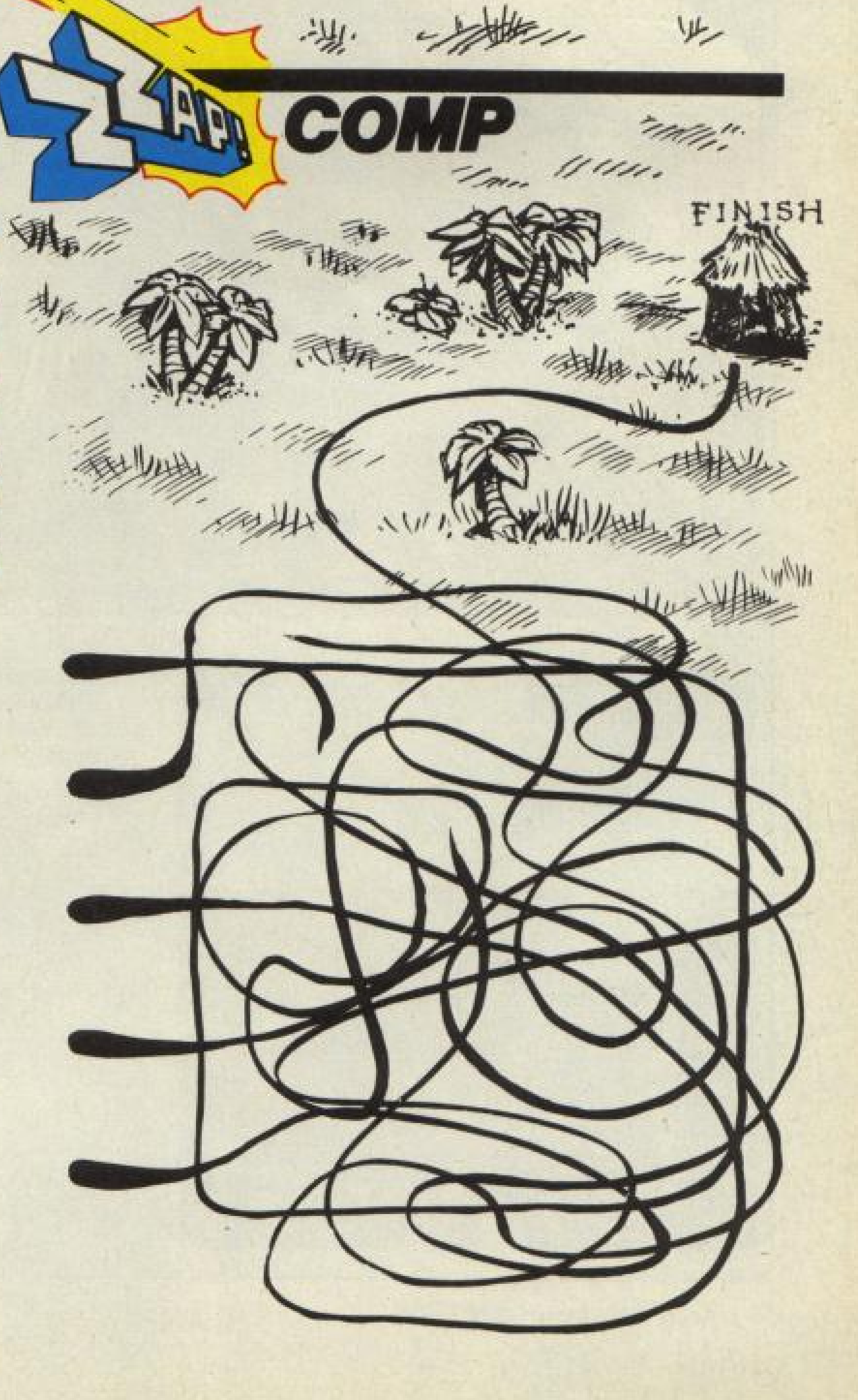
Ocean have a Saisho video player, a *Platoon* video and film poster and a copy of the game for the winner of our competition, plus 20 runners-up prizes of copies of the game alone.

To become the winner of this superb prize, you must study the map below and attempt to guide the lone GI through the jungle paths to a safe bunker, before the planned Napalm strike occurs. Only one of the labelled routes takes the soldier directly to the bunker in time, so you must find the correct one.

Write your answer on the back of postcard or sealed envelope, and despatch it to the usual address of: **PLATOON COMP, ZZAP! HQ, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than the 5th of February 1988.

Please include your name, rank, serial number and current location. The first one out of the helmet that isn't booby-trapped, gets to capture the first prize.



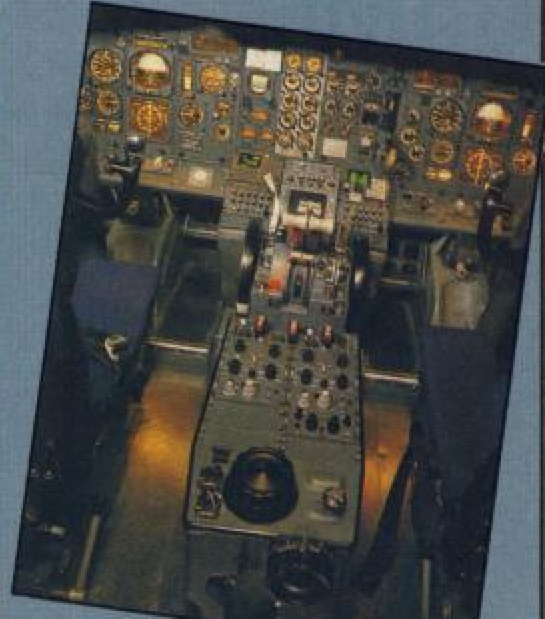


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In the first of an occasional series, ZZAP! reports on advanced computer systems in everyday use. Julian Rignall and Steve Jarratt visit British Airways' Flight Crew Training Centre and speak to Chris Barnes, Senior Principal Engineer (simulators) and John Silver, Public Affairs Manager (flight operations and technical) about the state-of-the-art flight simulators used at Heathrow, and the increasing importance of advanced technology in aeronautics.

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Amongst the mass of buildings on the southwest side of Heathrow Airport lies British Airways' Flight Crew Training Centre at Cranebank. Here, pilots and navigators are taken through their paces on one of 11 flight simulators currently housed there. There is also a Concorde simulator at Filton in Bristol.

All 11 simulators are on a constant 24 hour standby, and are used for between 16 to 22 hours a day. Pilots on type-conversion training or those being given their mandatory bi-annual proficiency check assure the simulators' high utilisation. The simulators ensure that their skills meet the high standard required by British Airways.

THE SIMULATOR

Julian and Steve looked at a Boeing 737-200 simulator, and were taken through take-off and landing procedures by Chris Barnes.

The main cockpit and display is housed in a large cabinet supported by a bed of six hydraulic rams. Access to the cockpit is via a small drawbridge, which is removed during the 'flight', to leave the simulator free standing.

The cockpit area is a perfect representation of that encountered on the actual plane, with the exception of a small area to the rear of the pilot and co-pilot's seats which contains equipment necessary to the running of the simulator and for the information of the training instructor overseeing the crew.

The term 'simulator' is complete in every sense of the word, since the hardware and software work in conjunction to create a totally convincing and physically realistic flying environment. Every facet of the aeroplane and its flight characteristics are reproduced to within an extensive series of stringent operating limits set by the CAA – the Civil Airlines Authority.

The actual impression of flight is achieved by the realistic image system and the three dimensional cockpit movement. The hydrostatic suspension allows six axes of movement and can pull ± 1.0 G in the vertical axis and ± 0.8 G in the lateral and longitudinal axes, effectively simulating acceleration and deceleration in all directions.

The two forward and two side views from the cockpit are provided by four monitors, whose image is projected into the window area by a beam splitter/collimating mirror system.

The Boeing 737 has a dusk/night time visual system which accurately provides all ground lights and airport buildings as reference for the pilot.

The high contrast/high resolution/fast update needed to create an authentic visual display makes ordinary TV screens redundant – the normal high persistence cathode ray tube creates glare and 'comet-tailing' from the individual points of light. To relieve this problem, each monitor employs a Beam Penetration display and uses a single electron gun to draw the whole image on the phosphor-coated screen.

Colour is determined by the 'depth' to which the Phosphor atoms are penetrated by the stream of electrons: the more penetration accorded a Phosphor atom, the higher the excitation level of its electrons, effectively altering the wavelength of the emitted light. All points of one colour are displayed, then the voltage of the gun and its focal length are altered and all the points of a differing colour are plotted and so on. The refresh rate of the screen is as high as 30 Hz – or once every 33 milliseconds – so the lapse between scans is totally undetectable.

With this system, resolution is limited only to the point size of the beam and the extent of the available X and Y co-ordinates of the electron gun.

The hardware employed in creating and updating the three-dimensional model of each airport is based around a Rediffusion SP1 system using a 16-Bit Texas Instruments 980B. The Boeing 737 visual system can generate displays of about 20 actual airports used on British Airways short-haul routes and the data required for each airport and its surroundings is stored on a 500K eight-inch disk, with each one taking up a mere 64K.

Although the image system plays an important role in creating a convincing flying environment, the bulk of the simulation is concerned with controlling the interaction between control inputs and the spatial characteristics of the aeroplane, its trim and the consequent feedback to the pilot via controls, instruments and the exterior view.

The main system boasts a Gould 32/8705 with a 32-Bit high speed floating point processor, with four Mb physical memory backed up by two internal 160 Mb Winchester hard drives and an external magnetic tape drive. A good idea of the capabilities of the hardware are seen when you consider that the bus band width is about 27Mb per second, which means that data is transferred at around 27,000K every second!

The computer constantly scans the whole operations deck, including every physical input. It must then decide what effect this has on the plane's overall trim, how the flight path has been altered, and finally how the plane's new spatial position relates to the view from the cockpit and the numerous displays and readouts available. To create the correct feedback through the controls, a separate processor is employed based around a Gould SEL 32/37 with Rediffusion microcode and high speed parallel multiplier. This applies the correct amount of pressure on the control column, rudder pedals and so on, depending upon the current trim of the plane (for instance, pulling back on the joystick is harder while in a dive, than in level flight).

Suffice to say, the cumulative effect of motion, visuals and control feedback provides a totally authentic experience of flight.

TO THE FUTURE

The training centre is about to take delivery of a new Vax-based Boeing 747-200 combi series flight simulator with full daylight visuals, and a 747-400 series full flight and fixed base simulator later in the year. Both systems cost about £10M each (the avionics systems alone cost £2M), increasing the value of the entire equipment within the complex to around £130M.

Chris Barnes sums up by voicing opinions on the way ahead, 'We only upgrade where we feel necessary. The simulators we use are the latest state-of-the-art but there is, of course, a requirement to keep up with technology. The growth area now is visuals: more processing power will be used on the image systems than anything else. We're getting digitally modelled 3D graphics in full daylight, with the ability to provide full ground based air traffic and different weather conditions. Improved sound systems are surfacing and new languages are being use to run the data. The future of simulators now depends a lot on the military, who can now create a complete combat experience, from mid-air refuelling to dogfights and bombing runs without ever leaving the ground'.

Indeed, simulators have reached such a peak of realism that BA has approval for zero flight-time for its Boeing 737 and 757 simulators – pilots may soon become fully qualified without flying the actual aircraft.

As computer technology advances, we may even see pilotless airliners, where a skeleton crew of engineers merely oversee the running of the aeroplane while computers do all the flying. Science fiction, it seems, is very quickly becoming science fact.

▼ Instruction Facility. Training captain controls exercise VDU screen whilst upper screen shows area maps.




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This month the Harlequin suffers a little Deja Vu, **recovers £1M** – Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less **– exposes** Jack the Ripper **and takes a trip to the 22nd century in** Rigel's Revenge. **May the adventures begin . . .**



DEJA VU

Mindscape/Mirrorsoft, £14.95 disk only

The illusion of remembering scenes and events when they are experienced for the first time.

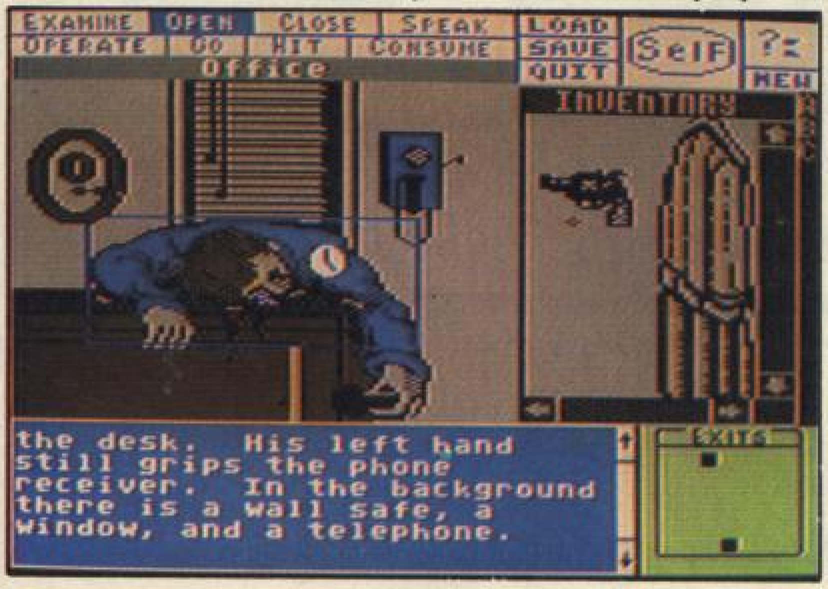
Reality shimmers into focus from behind a grey empty mist as consciousness slowly returns. Waking up in the lavatory of Joe's Bar with blood on your clothes and a searing headache are enough to make even the dumbest of us realise that things are not as they should be. Unfortunately you can't remember how you got here, why you're here, or even who you are.

As your eyes begin to focus you notice a coat and gun hanging on a peg in the corner of the latrine. A quick examination of such reveals several objects which may be of use to you later in the game – take them. While you're here take a quick look in the mirror. Recognize that face? You're not quite sure. Time to move on maybe. The immediate surroundings reveal a number of small clues including, on the landing wall, a poster of a once-famous boxer whose face is similar to that of the guy in the mirror, at least now you have an ▶



inkling as to what your vocation is . . . or was. But why are you in the state you are, and why can't you remember anything?

Manipulating a bottle or two



reveals a secret elevator which opens many other rooms within the Joes place, as well as a few clues and objects for you to ponder. The occasional dead body also has its' uses, containing (literally as you have to OPEN BODY to find what is on them) items of some importance. Once the bar has been thoroughly explored, it's time to venture onto the streets. If you get troubled by the mugger, a quick smack in the trap puts an end to his kleptomanic intent. The news vendor has some information for you if you buy one of his papers. He gives you some information that you could probably well do without, although it does give you an aim in life – and that is to clear your name of murder.

Deja Vu is an icon-driven adventure, but don't let this put you off – it works very well. The primary screen display is a graphical representation of the players' surroundings, with windows to one side depicting objects on the players' person, and within his vicinity. Below this main area is the text window, which is filled with location descriptions, messages and results of actions taken by the player. The graphics are adequate, although nothing special, yet as they're such an intricate part of the game they serve their purpose very well – identifiable rather than artistic. A command box is at the very top of the screen, and includes all the actions open to the player at any particular time, such as EXAMINE, OPEN, OPERATE and SPEAK. The idea is to click the cursor on, for example, HIT on the commands box, and then click on the mugger within the location graphic – and voila, one not-so-cocky individual. The cursors' position is controlled via the joystick. Similarly, items may be OPENED, EXAMINED, CONSUMED and so on. Objects found within the game which the player feels he could use in his inventory may be clicked on and literally dragged into his inventory window. Time may be saved in some instances by using the program's built-in logic. This works in such a way as to understand that a double click on a closed door means the player wants the door to be opened. This also works with examine and close.

Deja Vu can be a mite slow, due to the good old disk accessing, but overall it's a thoughtfully implemented, graphical adventure. It involves the player from the very start, and gradually makes it a necessity for him to solve the case and clear his name of murder.

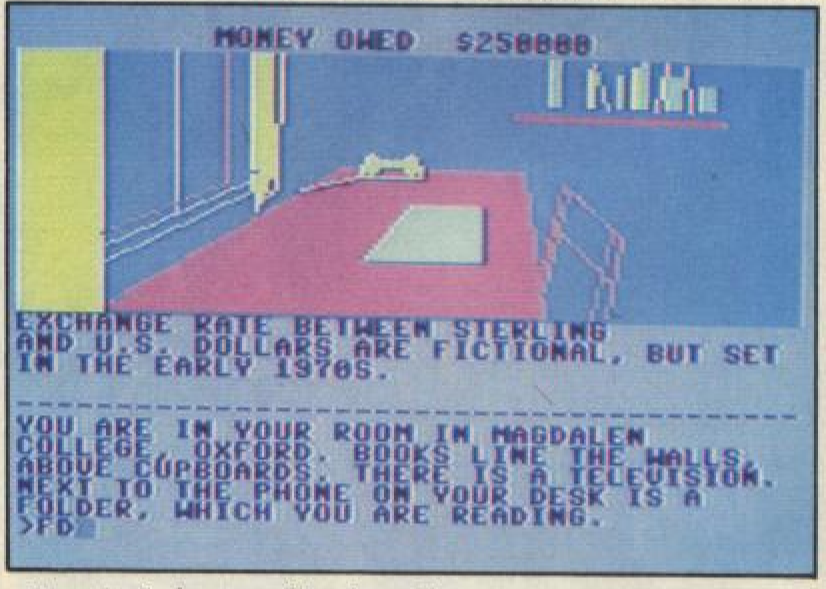
The illusion of remembering scenes and events when they are experienced for the first time.

ATMOSPHERE	84%
INTERACTION	78%
CHALLENGE	77%
OVERALL	81%

NOT A PENNY MORE, NOT A PENNY LESS

Domark, £14.95 cassette, £19.95 disk

The life of high finance is not one which appeals to me I must admit. I'd much rather be faced with an enemy I could smash to a pulp than have to deceive and con to gain a possession which was rightfully mine in the first place. *Not a Penny More Not a Penny Less* is the story of Stephen Bradley and his unfortunate encounter with a devious businessman by the name of Metcalfe. Bradley was conned into pumping all his money into a company owned by Metcalfe, and then rewarded by having it collapse under him. Left virtually penniless, Bradley swears revenge on Metcalfe and in the process discovers three other businessmen in a similar situation to himself who also wish to see the ruin of Metcalfe. However, there is no proof that Metcalfe did what he did to these four men, and therefore the forces of law and order are powerless to help. They are on their own. Stephen tries to coordinate his newly found allies in such a way as to replenish their lost capital, yet stay within the boundaries of the law.



The game presentation isn't the best I've seen, incorporating dark blue text glaring out from a light blue background. The graphics, displayed at the top of the screen, are basic to say the least and add nothing to the atmosphere. Below their designated area are the very brief descriptions of where Stephen currently is and what he can see. At the very bottom of the page is a single line for text input. There is some speech within the game, but after hearing it for the

first time I turned the volume down.

The parser is a little annoying – it seems to understand most of the usual adventure type words, but the way they are input has to be very precise. Synonyms aren't its strong point. Also, the way to visit people in the game is odd as the player has to type EXAMINE (name of person) to get to see them, and it will only allow him to do this when certain events have taken place and puzzles solved. I found that in the first location I could type EXAMINE ROBIN and the game would reply 'OK', but I was still in Stephens' office.

The general objective is to fill Stephens' folder with information about Metcalfe and his other three victims (reading the odd magazine is very informative), and use it to regain his assets.

Once the many idiosyncrases within the game have been mastered, the actual depth of play is revealed, which is somewhat disappointing. The computer game is no match for the book (which thankfully is supplied in the packaging) and it's quite frustrating to play. However, it's by no means a terrible program, definitely worthy of some perseverence – but not too much.

ATMOSPHERE	62%
INTERACTION	51%
CHALLENGE	54%
OVERALL	58%

JACK THE RIPPER

CRL, £9.95 cassette, £14.95 disk

The year is 1888 and London town is in the midst of a wave of murderous crimes, most of which have been blamed on one man christened by the popular press as The Ripper. It's into his shoes that the player is placed. The discovery of a mutilated female body is the opening sequence, one which the player can't avoid. In fact, there are several scenarios which the player is guided through without much interaction on his part. These are very atmospheric and even quite exciting to read, but if this is all I wanted to do, a book would have sufficed. Fortunately the game comes in three parts and there IS sufficient interaction within them to appease most of us text input addicts.



When the player gains some control over his fate he finds that the action is played in 'real time', and therefore decisions have to be made quickly and accurately. This is no hardship really, as there is a RAM SAVE facility, but it doesn't allow for too many wrong moves. Most of the action seems to be taken up covering ones tracks and moving from place to place as quickly as possible without being discovered by the local Peelers, who are soon hot on the Rippers' trail. The location, event and object descriptions remind me of the adventures created by a certain Rod Pike, but as I quite like his games and the St Brides ladies emulate his style competently, *Jack the Ripper* works very well for me. The topic isn't overflowing in taste, and some of the graphics are unnecessary, but the style of the text coupled with the atmosphere and excitement created all add up to making it a must for the adventurers collection. You are over eighteen aren't you?

ATMOSPHERE	82%
INTERACTION	68%
CHALLENGE	72%
OVERALL	78%

RIGEL'S REVENGE

Mastertronic, £1.99 cassette

Ah, the 22nd century, I remember it well. Not a good time for the Federation as I recall, but still quite an enjoyable era for individual members of the human race.

Rigel's Revenge, from Mastertronic, places the player on the planet Rigel V, whose inhabitants seem bent on avoiding the grip of the Federations' troops at all costs. In fact, they've even created a Doomsday machine with which they now threaten the very existence of the the Federation should it not withdraw from their planet.

The player is placed in the position of Harper, a notorious news reporter who's revered as a man who always gets his story, and as such is sent to Rigel V to dig for information about this rebel force and it's machine of destruction.

He arrives on the planet with his team mate Elliot, but unfortunately when the going gets tough Elliot doesn't and is now lying mortally wounded, leaving Harper alone with the unenviable task of finding the Doomsday machine and somehow disarming it.

This two-part adventure begins with Harper waking up somewhat groggily next to his dying partner. A clue to his first move is contained within the text of the loading screen. If not noticed I envisage the player spending hours trying to begin the game and probably ending up throwing it in the bin. I'm not one to give secrets away so I won't mention that GET GOGGLES, WEAR GOGGLES works very nicely.

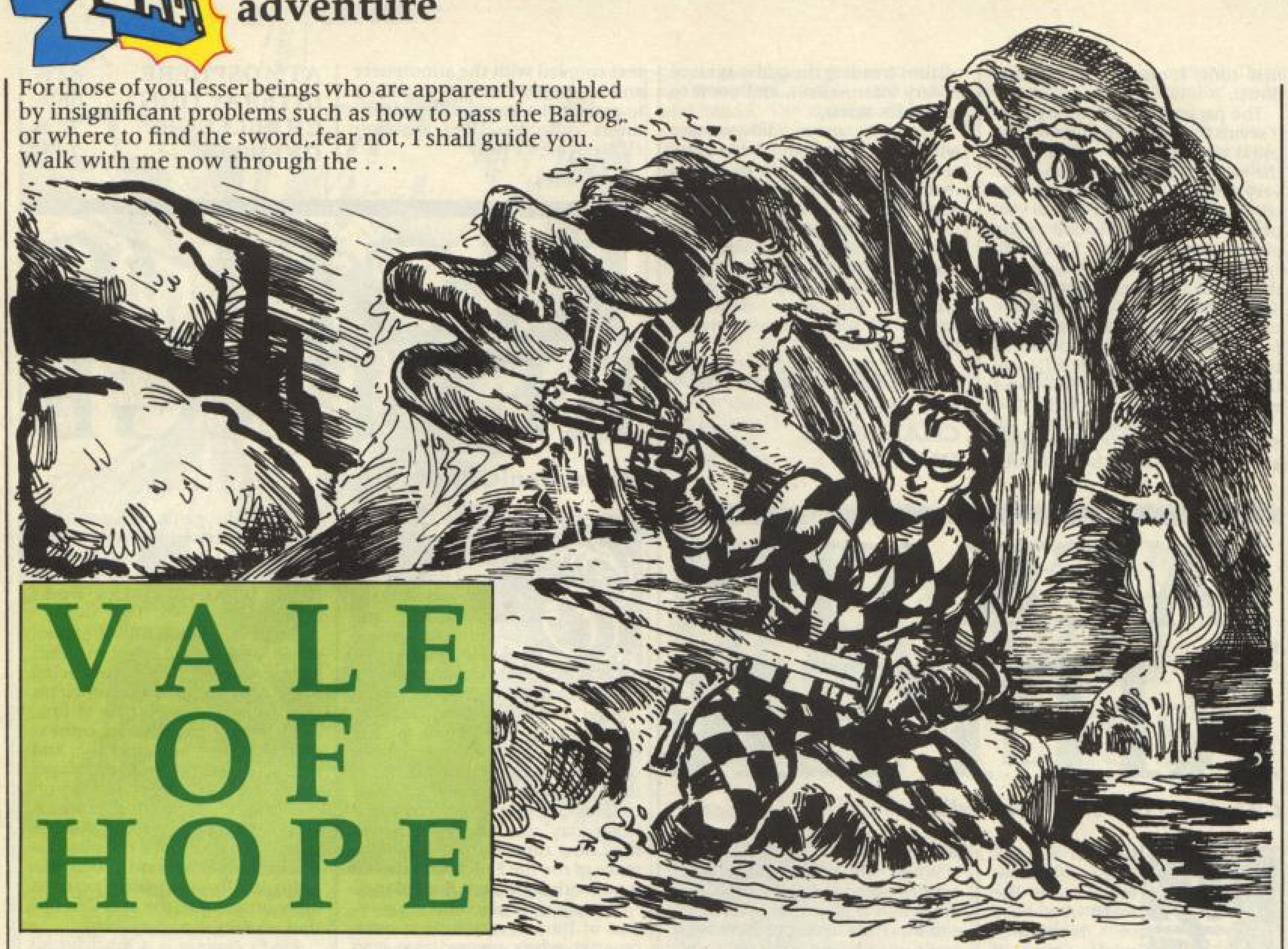
Rigel's Revenge is full of atmosphere, and I could say it succeeds in creating a sense of being there . . . Some of the problems may seem a little obscure at first, but they're entirely in context with the game and storyline, and interaction quickly pulls the player in, so that adjusting to this far-off planet and it's current dilemma is fairly straightforward. Sudden deaths abound, and if the player is not entirely observant progress is difficult. All swift-demise locations are warned of in the text description, so they can be avoided.



Rigel's Revenge is a must for all adventure players. The parser is more than adequate, and synonyms for most inputs having been thought of by the programmers. It's full of nasty, yet very enjoyable puzzles, has a certain wit about it, and the game inspires the player to reach the end – and it's also very good value for money. I would suggest it become part of all Commodore owners adventure collection as of now. Get my drift?

ATMOSPHERE	76%
INTERACTION	72%
CHALLENGE	74%
OVERALL	75%

For those of you lesser beings who are apparently troubled by insignificant problems such as how to pass the Balrog,, or where to find the sword,.fear not, I shall guide you. Walk with me now through the . . .



VALE OF HOPE

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS (Infocom): Put the rabbit in the T remover . . . and out pops a Rabbi!

HOLLYWOOD HIJINX (Infocom): Don't get your matches damp – cover them with wax.

KNIGHT ORC (Rainbird): Go to castle and climb the ivy to discover all those important little places in part one.

SPELLBREAKER (Infocom): You need a magic carpet to obtain the cube from the nest of the Roc.

FRANKENSTEIN (CRL): When the monster appears in the cave, just give him the picture from the house.

THE BIG SLEAZE (Piranha): Examine the car before you get in it and TOUCH WIRES to start it.

SERIALISED SOLUTION NUMBER ONE (PART FOUR)

KAYLETH

US GOLD/ADVENTURESOFT

Giving the Qnuts to Dribble allows free passage to the depths of the basement. Go down to the circular passage, examine it to discover that it's probably no ordinary tunnel and dare yourself to go in. Go on you wimp – get down there! Ignore the sticky secretion and go east. Oh no! It's the stomach of a Rock Gullet and you're slowly being digested. That'll teach you to listen to me! Remember the Nodule you picked up from the earth near the city? A quick flash is sufficient to make this Gullet creature throw up.

When you're safely in the underground storeroom, take note of the hoop and remember the words of Yagmok. East takes you to the old mans' living quarters where a very useful coat is found, and closer examination of your surroundings reveal another Azap Code (EPO).

Take the coat and go west. Put the fact that there's a ring present and the words of Yagmok together and the solution should be all too clear. It isn't? Ride ring!

Now go back to the Skimmer and head back towards the cavern. Drop the Suit and go west to collect the items you found on the shelf (the cube and Whiffy bar). You may also drop the badge now. Examination of the cube reveals that it's small and made of silver, and a closer look at the bar informs you that it may be spun around – at each end of it is a sickly smelling goo. Curiouser and curiouser. You may now go back to the elevator on the North side of the city (not forgetting to pick up the ball near the crater on the way). Drop the ball and the coat by the elevator and pick up the pyxis. Head north, north, northeast, north and east to come face to face with the dreaded two-headed Mokki Ray. This creature is obviously quite nasty, and therefore requires something just as nasty to deal with it. Give the bar a spin, the Mokki grabs it and runs off to try and eat the thing, leaving you free to wander the Twin Peril Forest almost at your leisure. A quick trip east brings you to a gigantic tree which you may have the pleasure of climbing to discover a little wooden door. If you remembered to bring the Pyxis, open it and a pair of lenses are revealed. Get them and wear them, and (whilst in the dark) think back to the manual you found and read in Yureks' place. Flip the knot. A blinding light beams out through the wooden door, and even with your lenses on you notice a marble tablet inside the tree. Get it, remove the lenses and examine the tablet, the letters AKN are revealed. I wonder what they could mean . . .

You'll just have to wait.

Clever Contacts

If this list looks similar to last months, just put it down to Deja Vu . . . A good title for a game don't you think?

Adventureland, Adenture Quest, Arrow of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
Bob Shepherd, 106, Highfield Street, Coalville, Leicestershire.

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik.
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France.

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle of Terror Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Worm in Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Return to Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes in Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda.
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA. Tel: 0227 274846 (10 am to 8 pm ONLY)

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka.
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Mordons Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325

Zork I, II & III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, SubSunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla.
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia.

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings.
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH. Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only).
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY. Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand. Tel: 867074

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula.
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland. Tel: 036565 594

Upper Gumtree, Bugsy Malone, Never Ending Story.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Eimtree Farm, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS19 0TJ. Tel: 0642 587789 (between 4pm and 10pm)

The Hobbit, Erik the Viking, Castle of Terror, Eureka, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Zork I, Zork III, Exodus, Ultima III, The Boggit, Lords of Time, Never ending story, The Hulk, Temple of Terror, Ultima IV, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Valkyrie 17, Sherlock, The fourth protocol, The Helm, Wizard of Akyrz, Perseus and Andromeda, Lord of the rings (part 1), Emerald Isle, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hacker, Colosal Cave.
Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs BB12 7QU. Tel: 0282 74765 (between 6pm and 10 pm)

The Hobbit, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Zzzzz, Spytrek, Robo City, Imagination, Demon Knight, Koboyashu Naru, Tower of Despair, Time Tunnel, Citadel of Chaos, Eureka (parts 1 and 2).
Paul Hardy, 33 Fir Tree drive, Wales, Sheffield S31 8LZ.

Hitch-hikers Guide, Zork I, Zork II, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses, Cutthroats.
Dave Rogers, 15 Elm Terrace, Westfield, Radstock, Bath, Avon BA3 3XP.

Amazon, Borrowed Time, Castle of Terror, Castle Adventure, Computer Adventure, Dracula part 1, Grand Larceny, Haunted House, Humalayan Adventure, Labyrinth, Mad Mummy, Mindshadow, Murder on the Waterfront, Never ending story, Ninja, Raka-tua Volcano, Scroll of Akhbar, Seabase Delta, Silver Mountain, Subsunk, The Boggit, The Dallas quest, The Hobbit, Ultima IV, Voodoo Castle, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Zzzz.
Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, 3047, Vic. Australia.

Ultima IV, The Bard's Tale, Voodoo Castle, Phantasie I, Never Ending Story, Dracula, The Prince of Magic, Borrowed Time, The Pawn, Seabase Delta, Deadline, Zork III, Wishbringer.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.

Hitchhikers Guide, The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, The Shadows of Mordor.
Warren Lee Melia, 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 4EZ.

Castle of Terror, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Mindshadow, Holy Grail, Redhawk, Snowball, Subsunk, Twin Kingdom Valley, Voodoo Castle.
Jeff Gillan, 50 Tynedale Crescent, Penshaw, Houghton–Le–Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7RP.

Starcross, Suspended, Suspect, Leather Goddesses, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Planetfall, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror, Seastalker, Beuracracy, Trinity, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchhikers Guide, Wishbringer, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Enchanter, The Pawn, Ultima I, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Sherlock, Gremlins, The Hulk, Terrormolinos, The Fourth Protocol, The Hobbit.
Billy Kavanagh, 49 Drake Hall, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2RA.

Never Ending Story, Zzzz, Quest for Holy Grail.
Tony Kinnear, 49 Wainwright Avenue, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 2SZ.

Imagination, Never Ending Story, Terrormolinos, Twin Kingdom Valley, Bugsy Malone, Hampstead, Robin of Sherwood, Zzzz, Quest of Merridaviod, Upper Gumtree. **Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elm Tree farm, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 OTJ. Tel: 0642 587789.**

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A small incentive is also on offer in the shape of a copy of the compilation plus a Philips portable CD/cassette/tuner with five-band graphic equaliser and four speaker-system.

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R	A	P	T	H	O	I	P	S	I	S	A	R
Y	G	N	O	H	X	D	F	P	S	D	T	A
F	L	L	A	O	E	I	A	A	P	R	T	N
O	E	N	Q	R	Z	R	W	N	O	O	A	Y
L	Z	Y	O	F	A	U	N	E	O	S	R	S
K	W	A	C	D	N	M	Q	B	H	S	A	E
S	P	O	R	T	Y	M	A	U	E	D	N	L
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Write the titles down on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard and write our address on the other side, it being: **HEWSON WORDSQUARE COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than February the fifth, 1988.

Please include names, addresses, phone numbers, IQ, inside leg measurement and bank account number with a sample of your signature – well, whatever's necessary . . .


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ZZ34

100 ALL-TIME COMPUTER GREATS

PART TWO

Mel Croucher's historic encyclopaedia of the people and events that changed the world of computing. Cartoons by Robin Evans.

~ TWENTY SIX ~

POPE SYLVESTER II. As readers with long memories will recall, I proved last month that computers have been around for thousands of years, but it was not until 967 AD that there is any concrete evidence of a calculating machine in Europe, and everyone knows that concrete was invented by the Romans. In that year, the Pope had gone for his hols to Spain, but as Benidorm had yet to be invented, he dossed down with some Arab guys who let him play with their balls on the abacus. Well, what do you expect from a Pope who names himself after a cartoon cat?

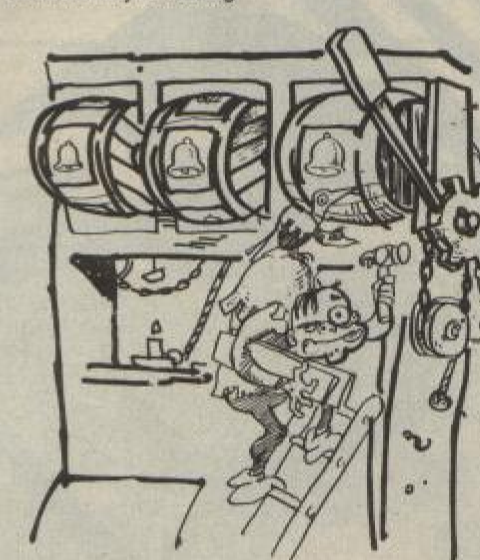


~ TWENTY SEVEN ~

JOHN NAPIER was a Scottish mathematician, and in 1614 he invented log tables. Before this date everyone ate off the floor. Napier was a bit of a wee pranny, and used the logarithm base 'e' for reasons that he kept to himself, but in 1628 another Scot named HENRY BRIGGS computed the logs of all the natural numbers up to 100,000 using the base '10'. Fortunately, all this is completely irrelevant to the history of computers because John Napier's real claim to computing fame is his calculator known as NAPIER'S BONES. These strips of bone had numbers printed on them, and were held in a sort of Scrabble tray. They made mechanical multiplication possible for the very first time, and traditional sex became a thing of the past.

~ TWENTY EIGHT ~

EDMUND GUNTHER got smart in 1620, when he ripped off Napier's Bones, and turned them into a single ruler named, with devastating lack of imagination, GUNTHER'S SCALE, whereupon multiplication and division was achieved with a set of dividers. But rip-off merchants never prosper, unless their name is WILLIAM OUGHTRED, who ripped off Gunther the following year by fitting one scale inside another and calling it the SLIDE RULE. His invention was used by spotty little bores for the next 350 years, and we should all be eternally grateful to him for keeping them out of our way for so long.



~ TWENTY NINE ~

WILLIAM SCHIECKARD was the original mad German professor, complete with Gothic horror laboratory, hunchback and a crow named Tubingen (Would I lie to you?). Sometime before 1630, he devised the first ever mechanical calculator in the form of a gigantic sort of fruit machine, with beer barrels for spools, wooden cogs and leather belts. I need hardly tell you that he was burned to death in a spooky sort of wierdo type made German professor Gothic horror inferno kind of a way, along with Tubingen and his uncompleted calculating machine. Eat your heart out Vincent Price.

~ THIRTY ~

BLAISE PASCAL may well have been taking the rise out of poor old William Schieckard when he chose his fiery Christian name, but nonetheless he was a clever little bleeder. In 1643, when he was only n-n-n-nineteen, he went and built the first working mechanical computer which could add and subtract faster than the checkout girl in Tescos, and display the result in a dinky little window. He went on to patent over 50 mind-boggling inventions, including the barometer and the hydraulic press, before he died totally clapped out at the age of 39. Nobody likes a smartarse, especially a French one.

~ THIRTY ONE ~

GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ was an even more nauseating kid, but he was a Kraut, so that's alright. He was only 10 when he figured out that Pascal's machine was totally useless when it came to calculating two dozen tins of cat food at the checkout. So all he did was to invent a stepped wheel with nine teeth of different lengths, and automatic multiplication had arrived by 1680. Last time I went to Tescos, they had still forgotten to inform the checkout girl of this fact.



~ THIRTY TWO ~

JOSEPH JACQUARD. Absolutely nothing happened in the world of computers for 120 years, and some of those checkout girls were getting a bit long in the tooth. Then, in Paris, Joseph Jacquard revolutionised computer aided design with a truly brilliant concept. He invented the punch card. Not only that, but he realised that he could encode, store and retrieve any information he wanted on his system. This guy was a genius. He predated today's robotics by youths then he demonstrated a weaving machine banging out user-controlled patterns. They said his robots would put thousands of weavers out of work. Now where have I heard that before?

~ THIRTY THREE ~

CHARLES XAVIER THOMAS DE COLMER had a very long and very silly name, and in 1820 set the course of computing going backwards by adding a hand crank to the mechanical calculator. The expression, "I'm going for a Colmer" was not superseded until the invention of the Wankel engine.

~ THIRTY FOUR ~

CHARLES BABBAGE was the Andrew Lloyd Webber of his day. He was an egomaniac, reckless and very, very rich. He was also a brilliant innovator. In 1822 he spent a fortune on building the first clockwork digital computer, and true to form, the £17,000 bill was picked up by everyone in town except himself. His DIFFERENCE ENGINE is today in the possession of IBM UK Ltd, and it is an amazing sight. It was intended to solve complex equations, planetary movements, economic forecasts, and horse racing form. trouble was it didn't work. The tools and metal alloys of the Nineteenth century were simply unable to meet the tolerance Babbage needed. He was still at it when he died, aged 79, trying to drive the damn thing by steam to make the calculations faster. What a guy! What a schmuck!



~ THIRTY FIVE ~

JULES VERNE (1828-1905), H G WELLS (1866-1946), ARTHUR C CLARK (b.1917). Hardware is junk without applications. Computers need artists, thinkers, writers and holy fools to fulfil their real potential, and I happen to think that without SF writers, and the ideas they seeded in fiction, the boffins would never have been able to indulge in the lateral thinking that made their predictions turn into fact. Of all my One Hundred All Time Computer Greats, thirty five is the most important, and I've chosen three SF writers who did most to teach us that nothing is impossible. That's my opinion and you're stuck with it. All I will do is list a few of their horribly correct predictions. JULES VERNE: the electric light, the radio telephone, submarine warfare, zero gravity, interplanetary rocket flight. H G WELLS: powered flight, aerial bombing, chemical warfare, television, the video disc, robot assembly lines, the Sony Walkman, evangelical propaganda via the media, acid rain, the credit card, the First World War, the Second World War, the pop-up toaster, Global Thermo-nuclear war, the micro computer. ARTHUR C CLARK: the space station,

the geostationary satellite, direct broadcasting from satellite, bomb disposal by robot, speech synthesis, the video phone, computer-generated military catastrophe. And if you don't believe the bit about the pop-up toaster, read 'The Sleeper Wakes' written at the turn of the century, it is awesomely accurate.

~ THIRTY SIX ~

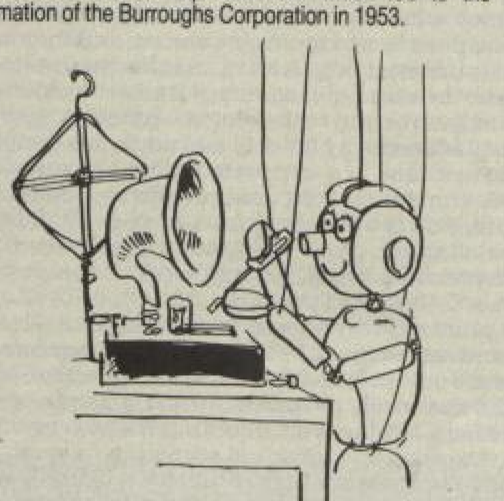
DORR FELT. America was still very much of a new idea in 1884, and they were naming their inventors after draught excluders. So it was that a Yank named Dorr Felt happened on old Self Abuse De Colmer's punch cards, mated them with a typewriter, and came up with something that we would recognise today as a desk-top computer. The COMPTOMETER was a key-operated adding machine with a paper print out, and the days of the little old guy with the quill pen and the dusty ledger were numbered, to coin a phrase.

~ THIRTY SEVEN ~

HERMAN HOLLERITH. Modern computing starts here. Sorry to waste your precious time with all the historical stuff, but you never know what a little learning can do. In the Year of Our Lord 1890 Herman Hollerith gave birth to a tabulating machine which was a glorified version of our old friend the punch-card analyser. It processed the USA Census of that year in record time with record accuracy. The rest, as they say, is history. Hollerith's company became IBM.

~ THIRTY EIGHT ~

WILLIAM SEWARD BURROUGHS. By 1892 it was all happening in the States. Bill Burroughs revamped De Colmer's 1820 machine, force fed it a typewriter with 90 keys, endowed it with a 9 decimal digit capacity, and produced the desk top calculator which led to the formation of the Burroughs Corporation in 1953.



~ THIRTY ~NINE

LEE DE FOREST invented the electric valve in 1906, all it could do was to amplify weak signals via electrical current. He didn't know it at the time, but he had just given birth to long distance radio, telephones, radar, television and the first electronic computers. As you have already noticed, the Yanks were still having trouble evolving into people, and insisted on adopting silly wooden names.

~ FORTY ~

VANNEVAR BUSH was a typical, silly, twig of a name. But Bush was a sharp cookie. If all those other guys were ripping-off long dead Frogs and Krauts, why shouldn't he rip off an English stiff? He went and revamped an 1876 Royal Society paper given by Lord Kelvin, which cooly stated that it was dead easy to build a machine that would analyse differential equations, but the Brits were too laid back to actually do it. And so it came to pass that 50 years later Bush went and built the ultimate mechanical computer, called the DIFFERENTIAL ANALYSER. Because Bush was a very lazy man, he stuck a bucketful of valves in it to replace all those tedious clockwork relays. It was only then that Twiggy realised that numerical values could be stored as voltages in the valves. Wowie Zowie! it's only 1936 and we've got a potential electronic computer as big as a bus and as useless as a pig in a synagogue.



~ FORTY ONE ~

KONRAD ZUSE. The British can claim responsibility for thwarting the birth of the first 'real' computer about four times by my reckoning. Herr Konrad Zuse was an enterprising young lad who built his first machine in his parent's Berlin kitchen in 1936. I never knew he changed his name to Clive Sinclair, but he did call his wee prototype the Z-1. By 1939 his Z-2 had most of its mechanical relays replaced by electromagnets. Come 1945 and little Konrad informed Mutti und Papa that he had built the first computer that was program-controlled. He told them in German, of course. The RAF bombed it to bits in English, along with the rest of Berlin, and we will never know if he was telling the truth. That's showbiz folks.

~ FORTY TWO ~

HOWARD AIKEN. Meanwhile, back in the USA, they were ripping off ideas from 1882, and applying Twentieth Century engineering to Babbage's Nineteenth Century theories. In 1944 Howard Aiken had not only got himself a sensible name, but also put together something called the AUTOMATIC SEQUENCE CONTROLLED CALCULATOR: Mark I. It was 45 feet long, 8 feet high, contained 500 miles of wiring, three-quarters of a million components and no guarantee. Despite all these minor factors, it worked like a dream until it blew up in 1959.

~ FORTY THREE ~

Number forty three has already been covered in Part One of this wonderful trip through the time zone, under the name of **ALAN TURING**. As early as 1936 Turing's revolutionary pamphlet 'On Computable Numbers' made the sci-fi dreams of thinking machines a distinct possibility. By 1943 he was working on the 2,000 valve based COLOSSOS series of machines. Data was fed in by paper tape at 5,000 characters per second, an incredible achievement at the time. But the whole thing was wrapped up in Top Secrecy and paranoia.

~ FORTY SIX ~

JOHN MAUCHLY & J PRESPER ECKERT. The year is 1945, the place is the University of Pennsylvania, USA. The machine is the ELECTRONIC NUMERICAL INTEGRATOR AND COMPUTER. The weight is 30 tons. The number of mechanical switches is 6,000. Plus 18,000 vacuum tubes, 70,000 resistors, 10,000 capacitors and a power drain equivalent to a medium sized town. Mr Mauchly and Mr Eckert put on a public demonstration whereby their wonderful machine multiplied the number 97,367 by itself 5,000 times. The calculation took less than half a second. Double wowie, double zowie! But don't get too impressed, the machine couldn't do anything else because it wasn't programmable. Back to the drawing board guys. We mustn't be too hard on our American cousins. Only three years after the first programmable computer had been built in Manchester, Mauchly and Eckbert came up with the UNIVAC-I, the first commercial computer in the world.

~ FORTY FIVE ~

JOHN BARDEEN, WILLIAM SHOCKLEY & WALTER BRATTAIN won a Nobel Prize, and I'll tell you why. In 1947 they invented the transistor. Miniaturisation was here to stay. The days of the overheating valve were over, the days of humanity plugged into Radio One while jogging, jugging and jiggajigging were just around the corner, but nobody believed them at the time. Valve manufacturers were churning them out at the rate of 200 million a year, and when the news of the transistor was announced – yawn – nobody listened. Except a geezer named Masaru Ibuka, whose story is told a little later.



~ FORTY SIX ~

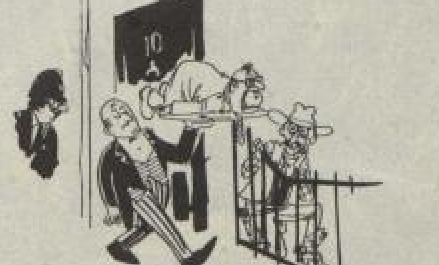
FRED WILLIAMS. The world's first ever computer that was capable of storing programs made its first wee decision in Manchester University during the terrible winter of 1948, in celebration of the birth of Mel Croucher. Fred Williams is the guy credited with inventing the storage tube that made this possible, (the storing of programs, not my birth).

~ FORTY SEVEN ~

JAY FORRESTER was yet another American to be named after trees. I suspect that it all goes back to a primitive worship of those rustic log tables. In 1951 he completed the first real-time computer, and called it the WHIRLWIND I, because he couldn't pronounce his Rs.

~ FORTY EIGHT ~

MASARU IBUKA ran a little outfit in Japan. One day he was visiting New York when he stumbled across a newspaper cutting about something called transistors, and discovered that the whole idea was up for grabs for the sum of $25,000. After a quick phone call home, he stumped up the cash, and nipped off home, where he made the first transistor radio in June 1954. Ibuka is probably the man most responsible for the shape of entertainment electronics today. He called his little company Sony.

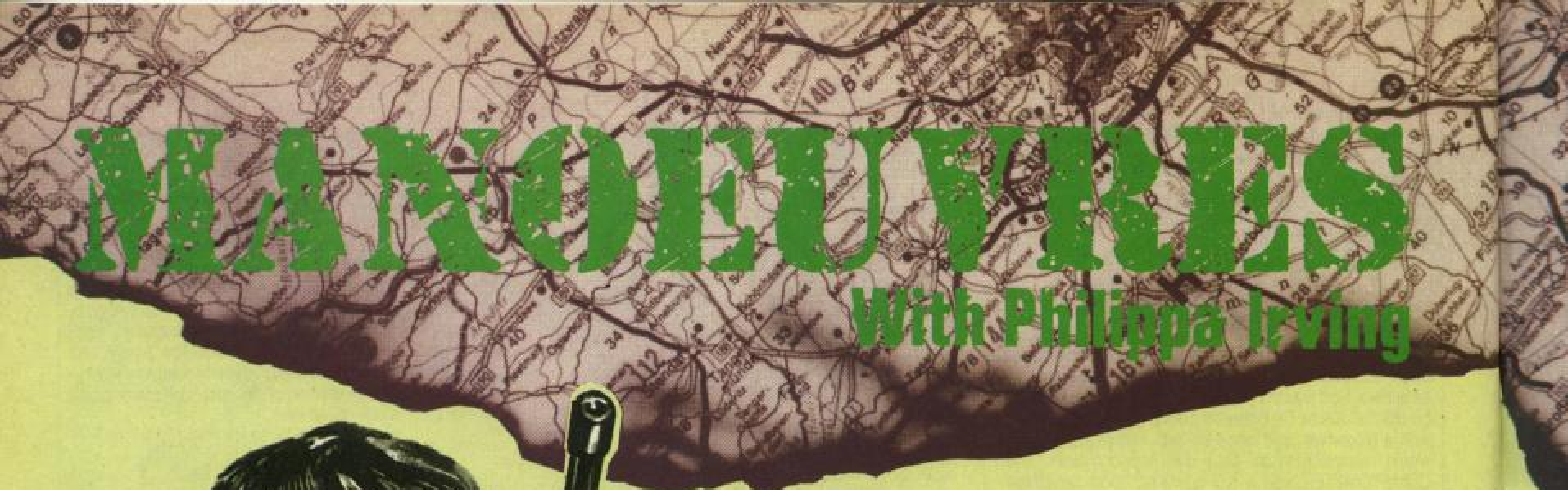


~ FORTY NINE ~

JACK KILBY of Texas Instruments made the first silicon integrated circuit, the chip, in 1958. It measured about the size of a match head. It was the foundation of all today's electronic and micros. This fact is verging on the tragic. I'll tell you why. In 1952 the British engineer GEOFFREY DUMMER was smarter than his name, and drew up the plans for a microchip that would get rid of the need for all those resistors, capacitors or lumps of solder. In 1957 he even made a model of a 'solid circuit' in Malvern, England. Stop me if you've heard this one before, but the British Government told Dummer to get stuffed, and his project, not to mention his patent, died. Ho hum.

~ FIFTY ~

FREDERICO FAGGIN. In November 1971, to celebrate Mel Croucher's 23rd birthday, Frederico Faggin produced the first microprocessor, the INTEL 4004. It measured 0.117 inches by 0.159 inches, it could execute 92,000 instructions per second, and it changed the world.



MANOEUVRES
With Philippa Irving



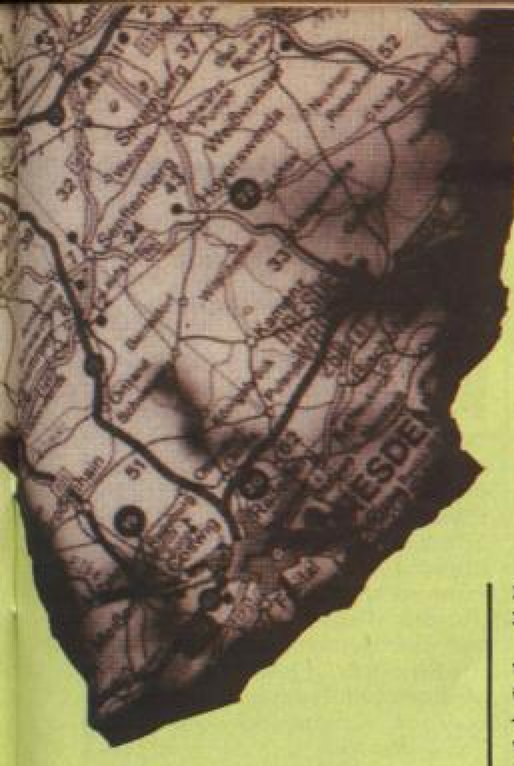
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

'Manoeuvres' may have a title which suggests the battlefield, and it's true that most of the games I get for review are wargames, but I'm supposed to cover strategy games as well. That is, strategy games other than wargames: and these haven't been very inspiring in the past. One thinks of banana republics, of starving or revolting peasants, of general elections and taxes. One thinks of *Football Manager*, and, though hopefully not too hard, of *The Great Space Race*. These are the sort of games which can be played in terms of simple numerical input, yes/no responses and multiple choices, and they're on the whole momentously unsatisfying. A lot of imagination has to go into the concept to make the numbers meaningful and the objectives the strategy achieves interesting to the player – getting these factors right made *Football Manager* a playable and addictive game. *The Great Space Race*, in contrast, is a complete failure because of the confused mass of irrelevant statistics it generates in response to a minimum of player input, and the tangled, open-ended rewards offered. The limited-input statistic game can benefit greatly from good design, but it can never be a living, moving work of computer entertainment. The format has limited potential.

But what is a strategy game anyway? It's not merely a game which requires the use of the mind rather than the reflexes to play successfully. Arcade adventures are solvable and not necessarily zappable, but arcade games like the cheerfully genocidal *Uridium* need some careful thinking and planning to play well. Shooting the waves of wotsits is easy – it's working out an individual approach to each level, and deciding which to go for and which to leave alone that gets the highest scores and makes the gameplay satisfying and involving. Decision making is the fundamental component of a strategy game.

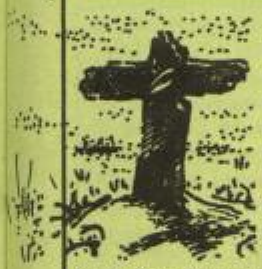
Theoretically, however, strategy needn't mean banana republics or wargames only. There's potential within the standard wargame format to create a different scenario, in an area of gaming almost entirely unexplored and underdeveloped. Adventure games are quite often fantasy or science fiction – whodunnits and related thrillers might these days be added as a third standard background – but there are certainly a fair number of notable exceptions which achieve 'alternative' plot lines. The novelty and quite often the humour of these – *Hampstead*, for instance – can be extremely appealing, and, what is more important to the software producers, commercially successful. The comparison between wargames and standard adventures isn't exactly a parallel one, because adventures are related to written literature and wargames are specifically designed to simulate battle situations. Any other concept which rides on the back of the 'cardboard counters' set-up will probably seem artificial – wargames also define their own conclusion and reward by their closed, combative gameplay, and this might be rather hard to transfer to an alternative context. But it ought to be possible.

And then there are other types of board games, the ones that have nothing to do with war in the first place. With its disk capability, the Commodore can accomodate adaptations of board games quite easily and this, I think, is the way to go for 'alternative' strategy. The complexity and ingenuity and sheer long-term playability of many modern board games would surprise someone who has only ever played *Monopoly*, and although some of these rely on diplomatic interaction between players, there are plenty of good and involving ones which don't. I welcome the appearance of games like *Lords of Conquest*, and even *Autoduel* – there's a lot more potential to unearth.



TOBRUK

PSS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk



*T*he *Clash of Armour* is the sub-title of this latest game from the prolific PSS, and we're in the desert once more – a locality increasingly familiar to wargamers. But there's no need to worry about getting sand. in your boots, because, as the packaging suggests, tanks are the main fighting units in this campaign.

Tobruk is a medium-range simulation of Rommel's attempt to break through a vast minefield laid by the Allies in North Africa between Gazala and Bir Hachieim to defend Tobruk, a key Mediterranean supply point. By medium range I mean that it doesn't recreate a single battle, nor does it present the player with a long-term extended campaign. The action covers a little over a month, starting on May 26th 1942, and combat is resolved in a single turn. The player takes command of the Axis side against the computer, and attempts to capture as many of the Allied oases as possible. Tobruk, up in the top right-hand corner, is the ultimate goal.

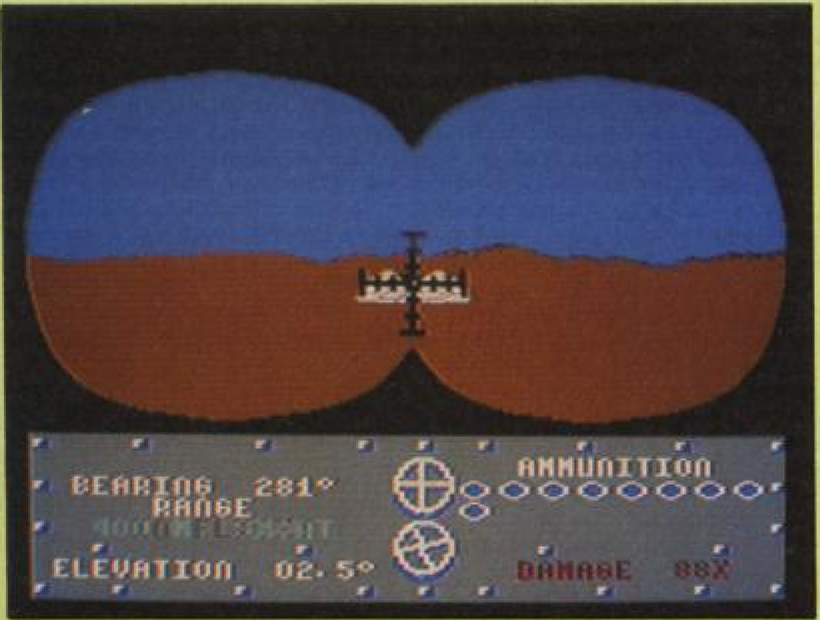
The main display is a visually uninspiring representation of Cyrenaica, with the Gazala Line – the Allied minefield – cutting the desert in half. According to the rulebook, the minefield was only half-completed when the offensive began, and it is presumably because of this that there is a way round the bottom of the line. The Axis troops begin the game on their side of the line, and all the oasis targets – and the Allied forces – are on the other. Identification of every part of the map is easy, because a Com Box can be moved over any feature, whether unit or landscape, for an instant report. There are few features on the map anyway – it's sand, sand everywhere.

Enemy units are examined by using the Com Box just as easily as friendly units, and the defensive strength of oases is displayed too. The system is smooth to operate, easy to understand, and unambiguous. Data given on units includes their strength in terms of supply of infantry, provisions and artillery, and the number of moves that the unit can make that turn.

There are two turns a day, predictably divided into Movement and Combat phases. A Supply Phase and a Command Phase occur every second turn, at the end of the day. Units are moved at the player's leisure by means of the Com Box, although they don't have the option of committing suicide by passing over the minefield, it's treated as an impassable obstacle. Entering an enemy zone of control – the squares immediately surrounding the enemy unit – arrests movement, though combat is not inevitable.

The Com Box doesn't let you plot out a movement further than the movement allowance of a unit, which I found a useful restriction and reminder. Movement orders are executed immediately, something else which helps in organising forces. When all units have been moved, pressing the space bar moves the game onto the combat phase. Combat is optional between adjacent units. Here, unless you've turned the thing off in the start-up menu, we hit the famous PSS Token Arcade Sequence.





This isn't so bad in a fast-moving type of game like *Battle of Britain*, but in the middle of this traditional cardboard-counters strategy wargame, which has no other element of moving action, this sequence clashes stylistically. As might be imagined, you're put in charge of a tank. Trundling around in a very unconvincing landscape, you let loose machine-gun fire or shells at the odd enemy tank or oasis, achieving little. There's an option to deselect it, and unless you're really taken with it the game loses absolutely nothing at all by its exclusion.

Without the arcade sequence, combat is resolved speedily and simultaneously, and retreats and surrenders are reported. Units always seem to surrender – you aren't given the satisfaction of a 'unit completely obliterated' report. The supply phase follows, and the player is asked to decide which units will receive the limited resources available. The importance of supply in a desert war is emphasised by the fact that the Axis forces have to trundle their mobile supply bases after their forces, and protect them from the enemy. This factor adds a lot of interest to the gameplay, because if both supply dumps are destroyed – and they are extremely vulnerable – the Axis side automatically loses.

The command phase moves onto another screen, where strategic disposition of resource points is decided. Points are put into things like AFV (armoured fighting vehicle) recovery to minimise losses after battle, and, importantly, into ground strikes and mine lifting. Putting a sufficient number of points into mine lifting allows the Axis side to make a neat break in the Gazala Line, to get some of the slower-moving units through quickly. Ground Strike allows the choice of one bombing target, which may or may not have moved by the time the order is executed.

The instruction booklet is entirely adequate, providing a short but informative summary of the historical situation and guides the player briskly through the mechanics of the game. There is, however, a lack of obviousness in the layout which makes it difficult to consult. It is also typeset without paragraph indentation, which may be a petty point but makes the layout look messy!

With two skill levels, *Tobruk* is easy to pick up and quick to play, but not easy to defeat. It has a hook in its smoothness and simplicity of objective, and although it hasn't much depth and may be devoid of ultimate long-term interest the short-term challenge it's entertaining.

PRESENTATION 85%
Slick and brisk.

GRAPHICS 71%
Rather uninspiring, but clear.

RULES 60%
Adequate, but badly laid out.

PLAYABILITY 81%
Robustly designed to be quick and easy to play, with no interruptions unless you count the arcade sequence . . .

OVERALL 70%
Not a bad game.

GUADALCANAL

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Guadalcanal describes itself as 'a comprehensive strategy game'. The end result is interesting and innovative, if not one hundred percent successful.

The invasion of the island of Guadalcanal by the American marines was the first offensive Allied move in the Pacific after the capture of Midway Island. It began with the capture of a single Japanese base with a half-completed airfield, which had been garrisoned only by engineers, who fled leaving their hot rice breakfasts behind. The American invaders completed the airfield, ate the rice – apparently the Japanese supplies became 'invaluable' – and called the base Henderson. In the game it's the American player's only definite foothold, and the place where supplies are brought to and distributed from. The battle for control of the rest of the island continued thereafter for months, and was fought on land, at sea, and in the air. Supply runs were vital to both sides, and slowly the American presence expanded enough to resist the customary massive Japanese onslaughts. After a complex war of attrition, lasting from August 1942 to January of the following year, the Japanese retreated in secret and the island was conceded to the Allies.

Given that this is a pretty full recreation of a campaign that lasted six months, it's very surprising to find that the game is set in real-time. I have expressed my dislike of real-time wargames before – they tend to be shallow and unplayable and lacking in atmosphere – but *Guadalcanal* runs at such an extremely slow pace that the time very nearly is real, and issuing orders quickly enough is not a problem. I can see some justification for using real-time in this game, because the many different things going on at once are all running at their own pace. The timescale is at least accurate.

There are no difficulty levels, but a 'trainer' game is provided to let the player learn how to control the units without inconvenient Japanese forces getting in the way. The playability of such a peaceful scenario is limited, so there's another introductory battle, short of the full campaign. The rulebook says that this short three-day confrontation is intended to let the player get combat experience. It consistently provided me with a humiliating defeat. Scenario three is the entire Guadalcanal campaign, though whether it lasts for six months of slow-moving real-time or waits for either side to achieve a victory condition is not made clear. Scenario four is the same campaign, giving the player the opportunity to command the Japanese forces instead of the American. All are loaded separately from disk or cassette.

The land units on the American side consist mainly of Marine Corps. They have a full range of defining statistics, including their level of arms, ammunition, supply, morale and malaria. Malaria is a major enemy on the island, and is capable of destroying forces quite as efficiently as Japanese guns. The malaria level of a unit increases naturally the longer it is on the island, and can only be kept under control by the issue of medical supplies. Morale affects combat significantly, and can be boosted by general supplies and rest. Arms and ammunition are used up in battle, and must be replaced.



Without further preliminary the game starts with a single well-designed screen subdivided into windows and panels. A bank of ten 'master icons' guide the action. Displays of active units and their condition, weather reports and naval losses are selected separately, and there are icons to pause, save and quit the game. Only two icons relate directly to play, and allow the selection of scouts and the distribution of points between espionage and counter espionage.

Most of the controlling action takes place on the map itself, which fills just over a quarter of the whole screen display. It competes for space with a long narrow strategic map of the entire area of play, a large information window, and a well-equipped panel which shows the date and the time in both digital and analogue form, the side that the player is controlling and the current 'phase'. Days cycle through dawn, daylight, dusk and night.

The play area takes in the island of Guadalcanal itself, the surrounding seas. Other land masses are unidentified and have no part in the game. Units are displayed as very small and sometimes not entirely clear squares, visually divided only into naval, infantry and airforce divisions. This is confusing, because the distinction between the different types of naval groups is important. There are escort groups, carrier groups and transport groups, which perform vital and distinctive roles in running supplies to the island.

In the campaign game, hidden movement is used to a great extent, and the player has a stable of six scouts of varying ability to send out one at a time on reconnaissance missions. These intrepid individuals cut through the thick bush in search of Japanese camps and report back with the enemy's location, though they're in constant danger of getting caught and bayonetted to a tree.

Air forces play a full role too. Some of the naval groups have aircraft carriers with their own planes, and Henderson has an air division known as the Cactus Air Force. Aircraft can only be launched during daylight hours, and carry a strictly limited amount of fuel and ammunition – sending them out too far from base is fatal. They can bomb enemy units and bases, and in the campaign scenario the Japanese are very keen to use their air units against the American navy.

With all these different elements competing for the player's attention, it's fortunate that play itself is not very complex. Units are ordered to move in a particular direction and to attack or withdraw – and that's it. Giving these orders by means of a command box is reasonably straightforward and painless, and because time advances slowly there's plenty of chance to do everything properly. There's a master icon provided for running the clock forward, and far from being rushed off my fingers I found I often had to speed things up.

Combat is seriously underpresented. When a fleet is attacked the 'radio', a strip of scrolling messages, informs the player that ships are either on fire, or have sunk. When the sea battles get underway there's a constant stream of 'ship on fire' messages, which are rather frustrating because there's absolutely nothing that can be done about it, short of running away. Fires on ships will eventually be put out if they don't sink first, but the damage remains until the fleet is dragged slowly to one of the supply points.

A lot of care and detail has gone into this game – perhaps too much. It's irritating having to drop and weigh the ship's anchor every time you go into harbour. It's an interesting experience to play, but I found it difficult to get into the swing of. I may have been doing something stupid, but despite the designer's injunctions that warships were priceless and were not casually thrown *en masse* against the Japanese fleets, I found that it was impossible to avoid disastrous sea battles. I did my best to be cautious, but the Japanese units made straight for the fray and shot everything in sight. What was particularly infuriating was the fact that they seemed to go down less easily than my highly-inflammable fleet!

The victory conditions are not made at all clear in the rulebook, which is slightly worrying. I was unceremoniously turfed out of the game several times, being told that there had been an American withdrawal from Guadalcanal when I still had plenty of ships and land units left.

The rulebook is reasonably well-written but lacks an index or contents page. It contains a condensed but detailed description of the historical background, design notes, and a complete list of the forces for both sides.

There's enough going on to demand the player's full attention and ingenuity, and it's certainly an interesting and satisfying challenge.

PRESENTATION 85%
Polished, with a slick, easy orders system.

GRAPHICS 70%
Pleasant and attractive, although the units themselves are rather small.

RULES 74%
Comprehensive, but the lack of a contents page and index makes it difficult to find things.

PLAYABILITY 71%
A lack of tangible excitement, and the slow real-time is a drag.

OVERALL 72%
Slightly ambitious, but worth trying.

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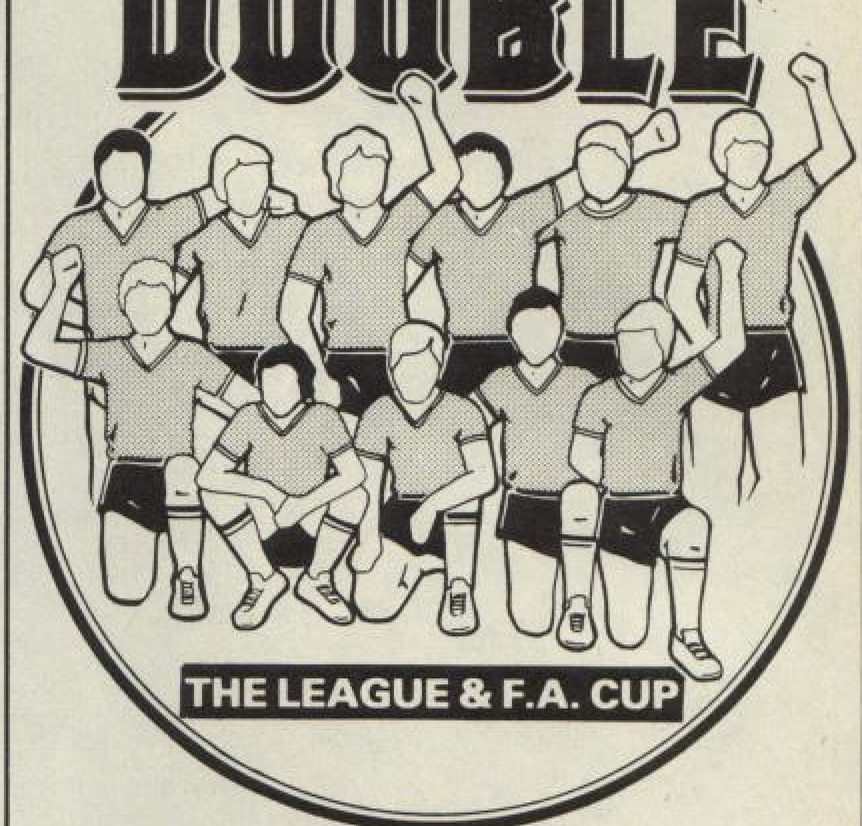
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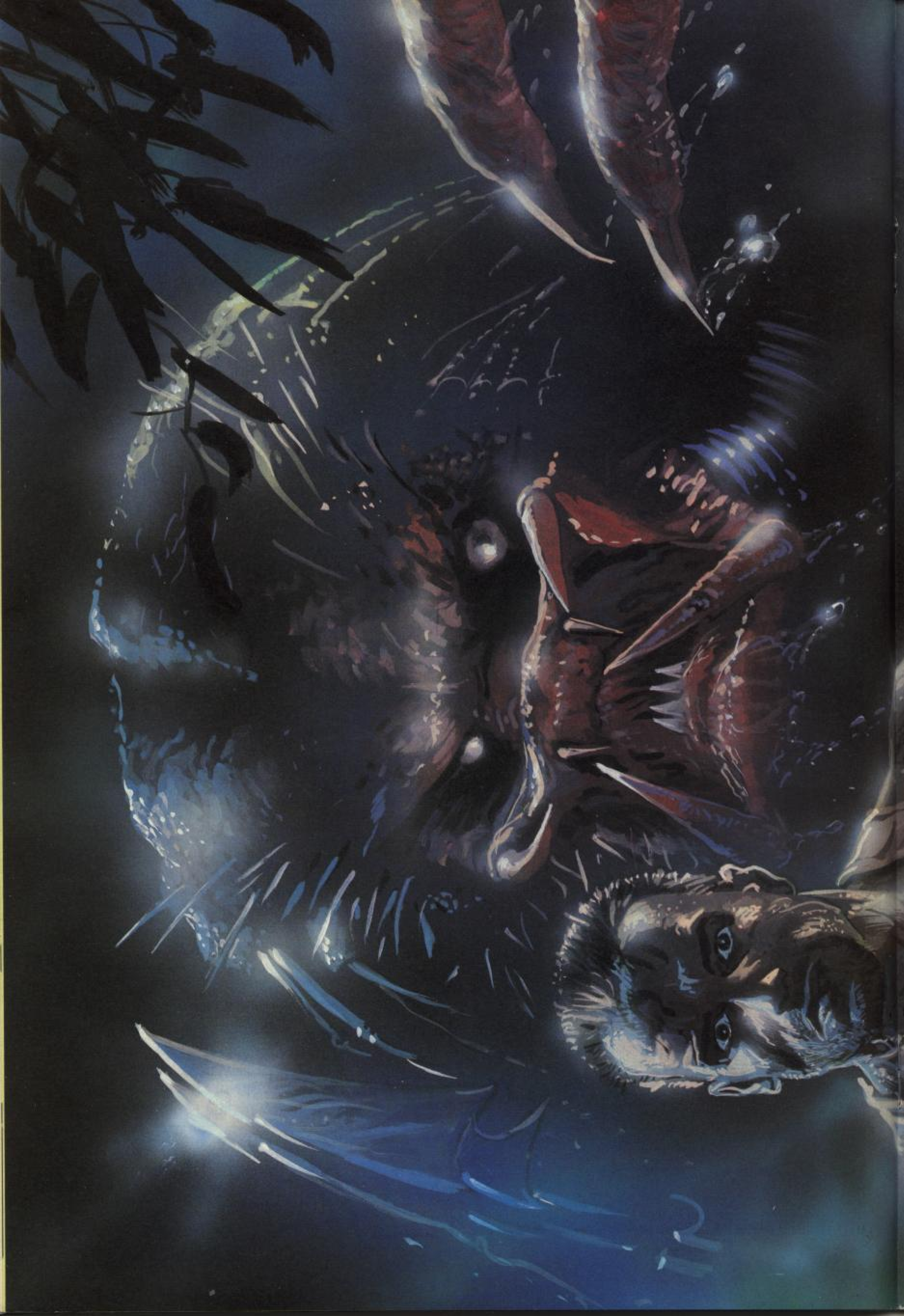
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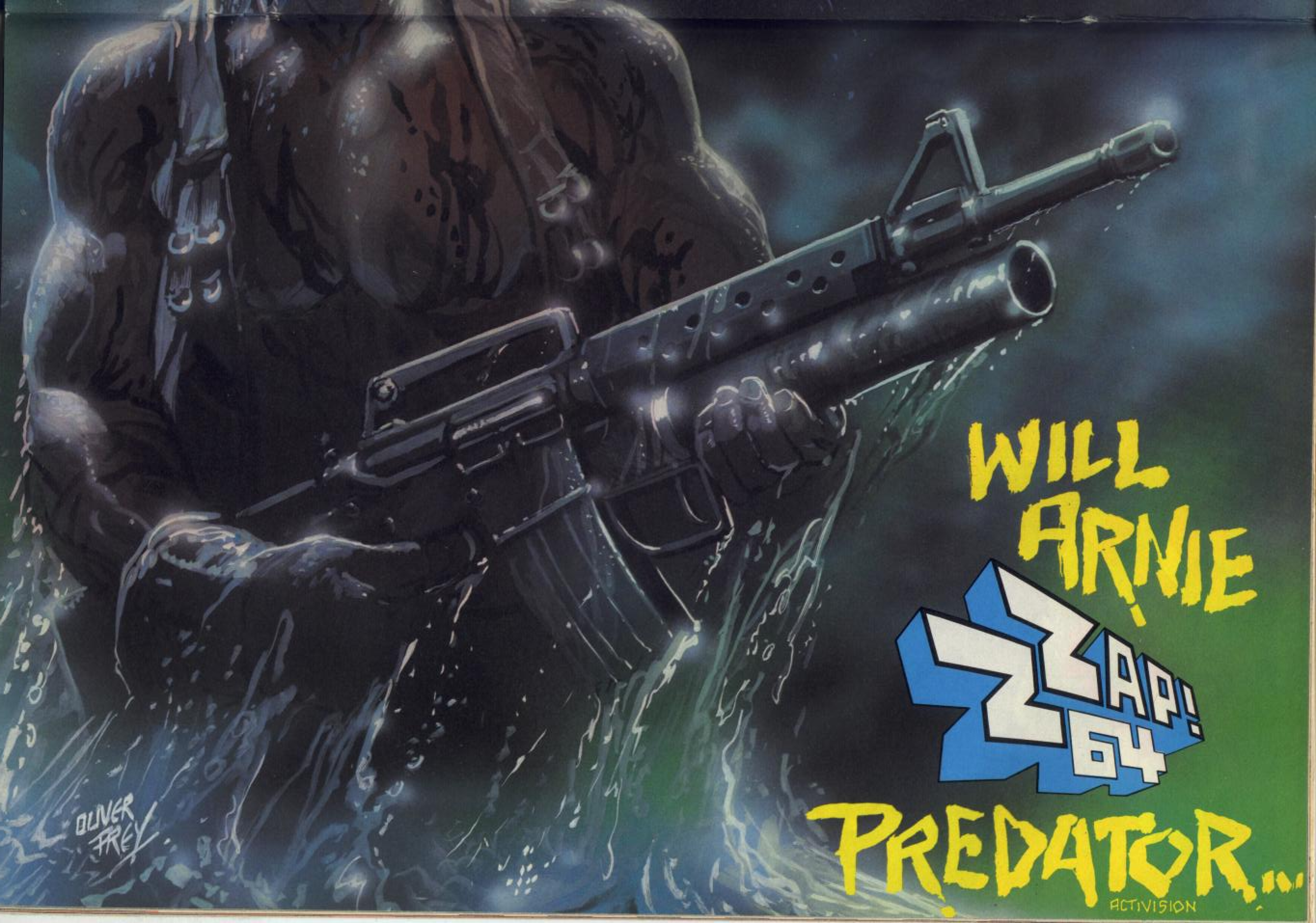
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Yes, yes, yes! Back with a bang! It's Jovial Jops, the people's favourite with the second and final installment of the *Sensible Guide to Construction*! So let your hair down a bit and become a hippy – yes, yes, yes, no, no, no, don't ever become a grimy egg-smelling hippy – oh no sirree! Become a computer bore – yes! A fabulously dull chip basher. But wait! Now, thanks to *Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit*, you can write your own full-price chart-topping blasters and be the God of Software. Just buy one or more copies of *SEUCK* (no full time programmer ever works without back-up files) and you can spend days playing with your joystick in the corner, creating the most earth-shattering computer game of all time. Just imagine, for £14.99 you could be more famous than Tony Crowther. Now, that's what I call a bargain. Ok, enough of the advert. Sorry kids. Now for the hard core stuff . . .

Last month I divulged a bit about *Slap 'n' Tickle* amongst other things, and this month the show must go on with the three other devastating pieces of original game design: *Outlaw, Transputer Man* and *Celebrity Squares*, all children of the big *SEUCK* parent in the sky, except *Celebrity Squares*, which is the illegitimate child of Gary Liddon and Gary Penn with able assistance from other parties.

OUTLAW

At last we are where our hearts really lie, deep inside the C64. What do we see, but miles and miles of desert. Fear not, for this is *Outlaw*, and we have just been taken back to Arizona to the turn of the century for the greatest Spaghetti Western in History.

The main objective was to show the way in which *SEUCK* could be used to create *Commando* style combat games by using the player to push the screen along. This is basically the 'push' selection in the LEVELS EDITOR.



SPRITES OBJECTS

The sprites were a tricky bunch, the main problem being that it was a task way beyond me to manage to get a shadow on all the sprites, and as I am of late quite obsessed with shadows, (you should see my collection of classic Scandinavian shadow books under my bed) this caused me quite a dilemma.

The basic Commodore sprite is just too small to create a detailed enough image of a person or body and still have room left to squeeze in the shadow essential with most sprites viewed from overhead. So, after much beating around the bush, I decided that I would have to lose the shadow on all human sprites and hope it didn't show too much – luckily I don't think the end result was that revolting! In fact, there are some *Outlaw* sprites that I am quite proud of.

I had quickly decided on my favourite black and white as the two permanent sprite colours. When I came to do Player 2, the buxom young Texas wench that wiggles as she walks, I thought 'Oh! What to do here'. But once I got her wiggling, Chrix could hardly pull himself back to his disk loader he was so excited, and I thought, 'Hey! this is no ordinary sprite, this is a living, breathing, sexy young lady', and promptly asked Matthew Tims, the charming boss at Outlaw, if he wanted my voluptuous sprite to dress up in something skimpy and pose for the front cover of *Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit*.

Actually, both Players are good examples of multi-directional Objects, although you may find the two frame animation a bit hard to cope with at first, (watch the way our hero stumbles sideways). Also, the injun with the daggers and the young whippersnapper who drops the bombs show how the same multi-directional features can be applied to an enemy as well as to a Player. Note that it's also possible to define your own frames of a sprite moving diagonally and put them in the appropriate boxes in the directional object! I must confess I cheated and used the forward and backward sprites for the diagonals of all the multi-directional objects in this game, but it does conserve a lot of free sprites, so it's not cheating really.

Both the kneeling injuns, (I used copy and mirror to get them facing both ways) and the sheriff use different animation frames more than once in their animation sequence. This is another useful and effective sprite-conserving technique. Also, both these enemies have their firing synchronised with their animation sequence. As I explained badly last month, the object firing rate can be synchronised so that it fires every time the Object enters the first frame of animation. This is done by multiplying the animation speed value by the number of frames of animation, and then making this new number the Object's firing rate. Try it out for yourself, it really does work.

The last word I have to say about sprites is to do with the varmit, the white haired old boy – notice the way he is designed with half his body missing, in anticipation of how he will relate to the background in the finished game.

BACKGROUND

Just like the Wild West itself, the majority of the Background is desert. Shoot games have one or two repeated blocks in the background that keep occurring time and time again, and *Outlaw* is no exception. Just two blocks made from about eight or nine chars form, at a guess, about 50% of the entire background. The secret when trying to create a natural terrain is to make the whole thing look as irregular as possible. Well, I tried.

The most striking thing about *Outlaw* is the contrasting perspective between the towns and the desert, and how this actually works without looking wrong. This is because the human brain warps its perception in order to see things in a nice standard way, so that it can figure out what's going on. If you think that the towns in *Outlaw* are bad, or that I'm rambling on about the most boring thing ever, you're probably a very perceptive perkin, but you're not wanted any more, so go and buy Commodore User, (sorry, I didn't mean it – honestly). So back to the point. Pay attention you lot! Pay attention everyone!!

The mazes in the desert scenes are made from rocks and crosses and things, and are done by making all the chars beyond a certain point solid, so that your man cannot pass through them – cunning eh? Note the way all of the shadows of objects are also non-detect chars, just to make the 3D even more realistic, not only visually, but actually being there as well!

The towns on later levels have mazes of sorts in the form of buildings. By linking these mazes with clever Attack Waves, you can actually create puzzles whereby certain aliens have to be killed from certain place, so you always have to think about where you are on the screen and how far you can scroll it up without altogether losing a necessary escape route from the carnage.

LEVELS

Basically, *Outlaw* is a 'push' *Commando* style game which uses a still screen at the very end of each level. This breaks up the action and makes the player feel as if he has reached a definite milestone in the game – non-stop pushing is very soul destroying. Also, with *Slap 'n' Tickle*, some parts of the map had to be missed out due to lack of ATTACK WAVE memory. Two pieces of map were stuck together using the CONTINUE option between the two sections to cover up the gap and make it appear to the punter as one totally smooth and whole piece of background. Ingenious, eh?

ATTACK WAVES OBJECTS II

The key to the ATTACK WAVES is all to do with where the enemies appear on the screen. Because it is a pushing game, one knows exactly how high up the screen the player is going to be when the enemy does appear. So, if you have the enemy come on and fire directly at the point where the ▶

player is standing, the game obviously becomes harder. This is why a lot of the injuns with bows and arrows slide on from the top half, either side of the screen, thus directly hassling our poor defenceless hero in the middle. The varmits do the same thing on later stages.

A lot of the enemies deliberately make life difficult for you – the boys drop bomb boxes invariably in the very place you were hoping to go, the snakes slither down the pathways in the desert mazes and the sheriffs don't always pick the most convenient places to carry out their shooting trials. Also, you should observe in the Enemy bits, the way that identical looking aliens are in fact made more vicious and spiteful for later levels, especially the varmits. The worms act purely as shootable and oh-so-loveable bonus points, and the quicksand actually blends into the background by staying still and scrolling on with the map as if it were part of it. The fires also do this, but they fire also (get it?). The use of animated sprites in the background is especially apparent in the fiery injun village before Matthewsville.

PLAYER LIMITATIONS

Really, the whole crux of *Outlaw* is exactly where the pushing level is in relation to the screen. This is done on the PLAYER LIMITATIONS editor, and wasn't finalised until the very end. Short range shots were also used in order to force the player to have to move around the screen more. So folks, in a nutshell, that's *Outlaw* – perhaps the most fun-packed game ever to have made its way onto your C64. Oh no, not quite. Sorry, I forgot about . . .

TRANSPUTER MAN

A new concept in computer gaming technology. *Transputer Man* is intended to be a still-screen, loads-of-aliens game like *Robotron 2084*, and in the end mutated into a total freak of its species.

SPRITES

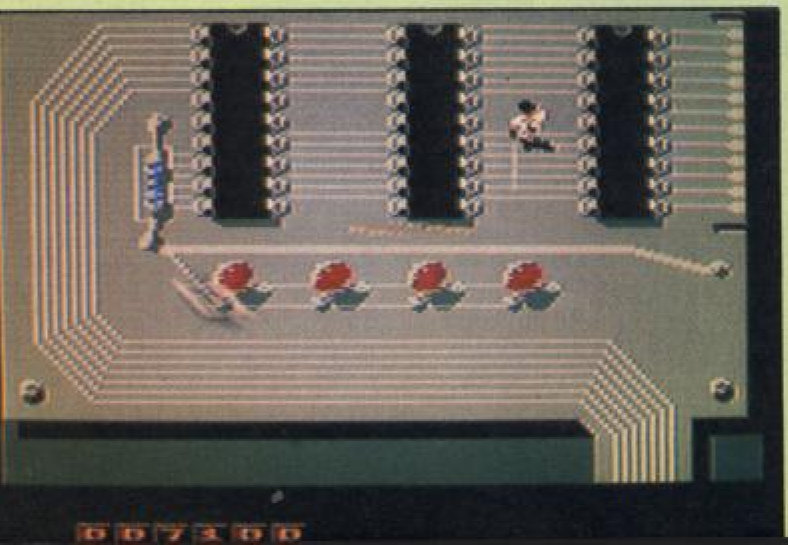
The sprites are viewed at an angle, slightly from one side, but mainly from above, so you get a little bit of body and a big bit of head with the men, (recognise that little fellow – old heroes never die). The shadow also adds depth to all the sprites, except the ghost which is immaterial and therefore casts no shadow. Also notice the way the hole from which the ghost appears is part of the sprite, even though it blends in with the background.

The flying rocket's wings, when fully spread, come in only by a pixel a time for the first few frames used, then at a faster rate until the wings meet in the middle. This is because for the first few frames the wings are moving faster vertically than horizontally, which is less discernible from above than horizontal, hence it appears to move less. Hooray! Hooray! A science lesson a day keeps the doctor at bay! Discuss arguing points both for and against in not more than five words.



BACKGROUND

The background is designed in greys so as to avoid black and white, the harshest of the 64's colours. The shapes are simple and clean for that extra computery feel. Again, detecting chars are used to block your path, and on later levels the gaps between the boards are also used to make the screens less easily negotiable. I had to make sure that all of the map's out of bounds areas were detecting chars, otherwise a dead transputer may well have been revitalised in a totally useless part of the map. For the transputer, I filled a blank block with 25 unused characters, and used the delightful PAINT BLOCK feature to design the Transputer. Always use the PAINT BLOCK for defining large detailed shapes on the landscape – it's a Godsend. The blocks went very quickly with this game because there's so much detail to each screen.



LEVELS

The reason the screen is repeated five or six times on the map is because each apparent level is really five or six still-screen levels joined together, with the same picture redrawn over the top. It's a different part of the map, so it's got different Attack Waves – clever huh? It did take a while to set the length of each level however, as it does with any still-screen level in a *SEUCK* game. Just keep on trying out different amounts of time until it all flows well and smoothly onto the next phase of the game.

ATTACK WAVES

There's nothing really special to say about the attack waves apart from the bonuses, which show how it's possible to have pick-up bonuses in games, such as they keys in *Gauntlet*.

Also, take a good peak at those gorgeous dancing girls – the hideous little tunes they dance to are actually created by their firing noises. The bullets they fire are invisible and move very fast so as not to clog the screen with sprites. They all fire the same basic tone of sound effect. In fact, the sound effects for the girls are all exactly identical, except for the pitch of the note. The black girls play normally, the Middle Eastern girls' bass notes are a third above that, and the whities play the fifth of the root note.

By making the firing rates of the girls all mathematically divisible – 20, 40 and 60 – and making sure all the girls appear at the same time on the screen, you get an almost in-time little ditty, however hideous it is. The best tunes are meant to be a bit off-time – it's jazz man, know what I mean? It's *feel* baby.

SOUND FX

Chrix did most of the SFX for *Transputer Man*, as well as all the *SEUCK utilities*. What a busy man, eh, and what lovely SFX they are too – all echoey and burbly. Don't ask me how he did 'em, 'cause I don't know, and I can't ask him cause he's asleep at the moment, and anyway, he's nearly thirty miles away, so I don't think I'd hear him too well.

PLAYER LIMITS

See how the full-screen player area makes the pushing levels look just a bit suspect? Don't say we didn't warn you! Well, there it is, all the *SEUCK* games in a nutshell.

Oh sorry, I forgot about *Celebrity Disaster* – shame on me. Shame, shame! Mumble, mumble, mumble! Fetch me my straight jacket! Well, *Celebrity Squares* adequately demonstrates the use of detectachars that kill you, and also demonstrates that dark grey is the best colour to lowlight sprites when they're travelling over a totally black background – space for those of you with an over vivid imagination. And that's it, there's nothing else I have to say about *Celebrity Squares*, if you want to know more about it, go out and buy it and see for yourself. C'mon give us your money punters, we love you all!

In a way of rounding off, I'd like to enlighten the few people who haven't understood the way the *SEUCK* tape is laid out. On side one there's an introduction screen, followed by *SEUCK with Slap 'n' Tickle* and *SEUCK with Outlaw*. Side two starts with a blank *SEUCK* (ready and waiting for your latest sizzler), followed by *SEUCK with Transputer Man* and *SEUCK with Celebrity Squares*.

To load each program you must roughly locate the starting position of each program and press SHIFT/RUN STOP as usual, then press play on tape. Once you've found the starting point of each program, we suggest you take a note of the tape counter, so that the next time you want to load it, you'll know exactly where it is without having to guess. I hope that is all clear to those people concerned. As way of signing off this fun-packed document, I'd like to tell you that one software company has already received a demo of a game written on *SEUCK*, although it was rumoured to be a little reminiscent of *Slap 'n' Tickle*.

So come on you lot, get writing those games, and one day, you could be so famous you'll be burning your money because your oil refinery broke down.

Anyone can write games on *SEUCK*. I wrote *Transputer Man*, *Outlaw* and *Slap 'n' Tickle* all by myself, and I can't even format my own disks! So for once, us ones with all the ideas and no technical knowledge can knock those smart-assed programmers on the head. Now we can be equal or even better. We can also be Butter, Margarine, Coleslaw, Lemonade, Hamwiches, Bernard Matthews, Ted Moult, John Noakes, Blue Peter, Play School, Humpty, Hamble . . .

Man Servant! Summon me my splendiferous technicolour dreams straightjacket. My name is Rubberwinkle, Gibber, Gibber!!

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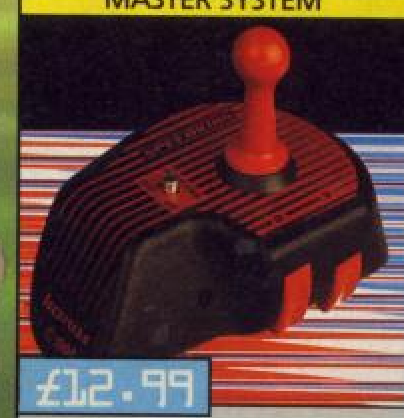
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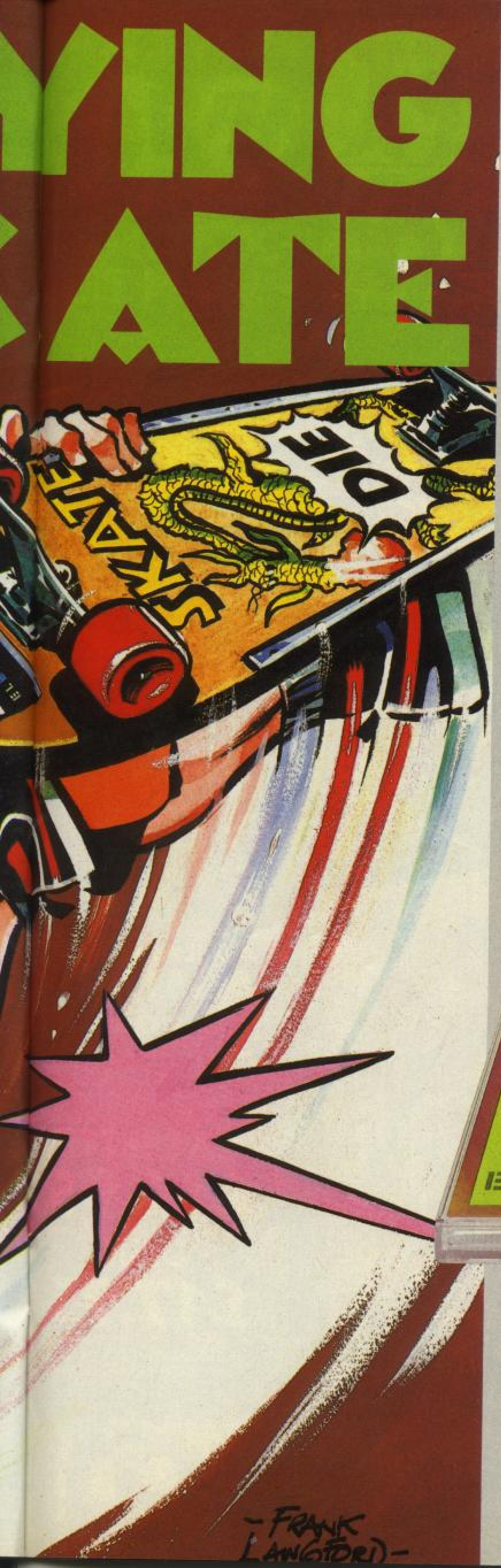
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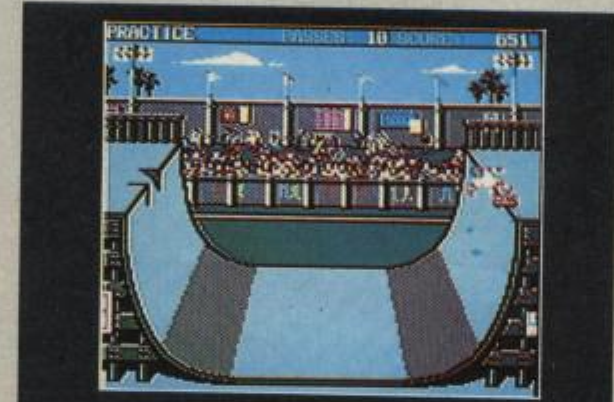

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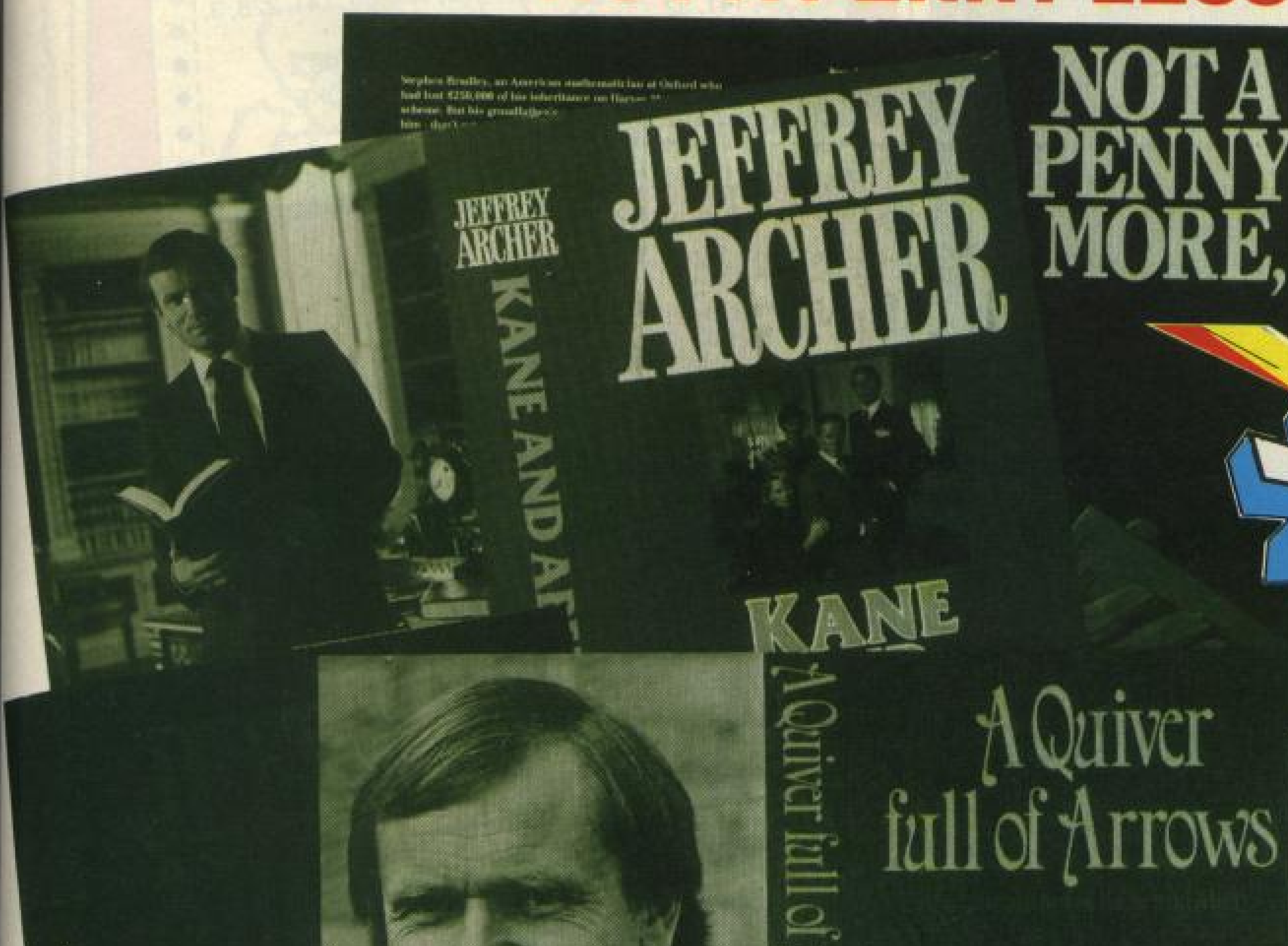
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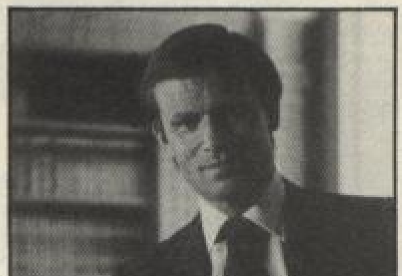
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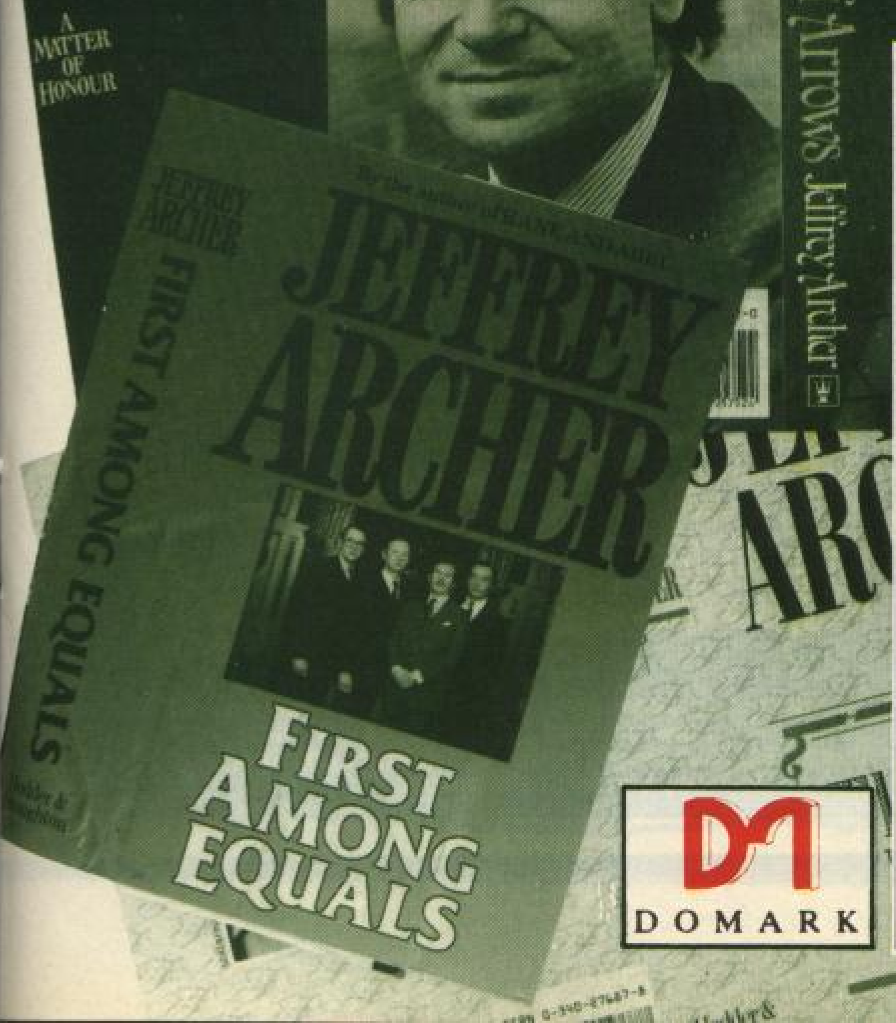
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ZZAP! COMP





Following the success of Jeffrey Archer's first novel, Domark have just released a graphical text adventure based on the devious exploits of Stephen Bradley and his chums, in *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less.*

In way of celebration, Domark have managed to secure a set of Jeffrey Archer hardback novels, including Not a Penny More Not a Penny Less, A Quiver Full of Arrows, The Prodigal Daughter, Kane and Abel, A Matter of Honour and First Among Equals. All six books have been signed by the author, so the set is of an inestimable value.

The entire set will go to the winner of our competition, and Domark have also provided 50 runners-up prizes of a copy of the novel, Not a Penny More, Not a penny Less.

All those of a literary bent should be keen to enter, and so to win one of these prizes, we want you to write a short story based on whatever subject matter you want. The complete story should be no longer than 500 words long, and preferably neatly typed or hand-written. Illegible entries will be made into paper aeroplanes – so there.

Send in your Pulitzer prize-winning entry to: **PAPER-BACK WRITER COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than February the 5th, 1988.

Names, addresses, phone numbers and all the relevant personal details appertaining to you should be included to enable our vast team of highly-trained editorial staff (well, Glenys) to sort out the prizewinners.

DOMARK

ZZAP!

TIPS



No, Julian hasn't had major plastic surgery – it's a new person at the helm of the good ship ZZAP! tips. Poor old Jaz has got bogged down with all his new editorial duties (ho, ho), so he gave me this column as a (sort of) Christmas present. A big, sarcastic thanks . . .

So! Have you recovered from the Christmas Experience yet? Bridge Over The River Kwai for the twentieth time? Ol' Santa squeezing down your chimney and breaking the all-new wall-mounted slim-line 'pay nothing till October 2010 at only 74% APR' gas heating system? Well, even if you didn't get all the goodies you wanted, I've still got a sackful here (loud throwing-up noises at that last link). Seriously though, there are a couple of rather radical Athena and Tai Pan maps, an absolutely mega Nebulus – and some brilliant supplementary pokes to chew through.

HYBER BLOB (Firebird)

This odd little budget game is great fun, but if you're bored with being stuck on the early levels, simply use these passwords from Raymond Goff in Dunfermline, Fife and tackle those really meaty high levels . . .

PINK PYJAMAS
GREEN SCREEN
MIDNIGHT RAMBLIN
YUK!
QUICK!
HONK HONK
NOT TOO HARD
SCREEN NINE
SAM'S HAIRSTYLE
QUICKER!
WIBBLIES
BROWN SAUCE
BEEFBURGERS 'N' RICE
CHARLIE FARLEY
INDIANA BLOB
IZOPLOMKIN
JACKY WACKY
CLEVER JOYSTICK
BISCUIT
EASY!
PICK IT UP!
PUT IT DOWN
WOBBLE IT ABOUT
SMELLY ARMS
JIM THE GERM
FINAL CUT
REASSEMBLY
DIGITAL CLOCK
SEASIDE
JIM'S HAMSTER
DEJA VU

RADIUS (Players)

Once more this month, RW Troughton gives us a snippet of information – namely that entering MEANTEAM instead of your own name on the highscore table gives you 256 lives. A mixed blessing, really.

MULTI HINTS (Firebird/Activision)

That hacking person Mr Troughton has supplied a multi-purpose program that gives a whole novaload of goodies. Here's the basic listing, which should be typed in first and then saved. For each game, add the appropriate lines, pop the rewound tape in the deck, and RUN the modified program. Great, eh?

```
100 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 7, 141, 225, 3, 169, 32,
141, 226, 3
110 DATA 169, 36, 141, 227, 3, 169, 64, 141, 228, 3,
96, 141, 32
120 DATA 208, 169, 234, 141, 146, 133, 96
130 FOR L=16396 TO 16429:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT
140 SYS 16396
```

For River Raid use this as it stands.

For Zenji, change line 120 to . . .

```
120 DATA 208, 169, 0, 141, 191, 137, 96
```

For Pitfall change line 120 to . . .

```
120 DATA 208, 169, 165, 141, 197, 135, 96
```

For Pitfall II change line 120 to . . .

```
120 DATA 208, 169, 56, 141, 123, 154, 96
```

For Beam Rider enter . . .

```
120 DATA 208, 169, 173, 141, 243, 160, 96
```

For Zone Ranger, add the following . . .

```
120 DATA 208, 169, 165, 141, 224, 138, 141, 69, 169,
96
130 FOR L=53212 TO 53260:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT
140 SYS 53212
```

THUNDERCATS (Elite)

Ferocious Felines! A purely perfect POKE from the hapless handyman of hasty hacking, RW Troughton. Throw the tantalisingly taut tape in the terrific tape deck, and type in the following luscious listing in a frenzy of fevered digital dexterity. (Note – alliteration copyright Roget S Thesaurus).

```
100 DATA 169, 1, 170, 160, 0, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 32,
189, 255, 162, 1, 160, 8
110 DATA 32, 213, 255, 169, 243, 141, 243, 3, 169,
207, 141, 244, 3, 76, 13, 8
120 DATA 169, 0, 141, 26, 4, 169, 208, 141, 27, 4, 76,
132, 255, 169, 173, 141
130 DATA 16, 137, 76, 13, 8
140 FOR L=53202 TO 53255:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 53202
```

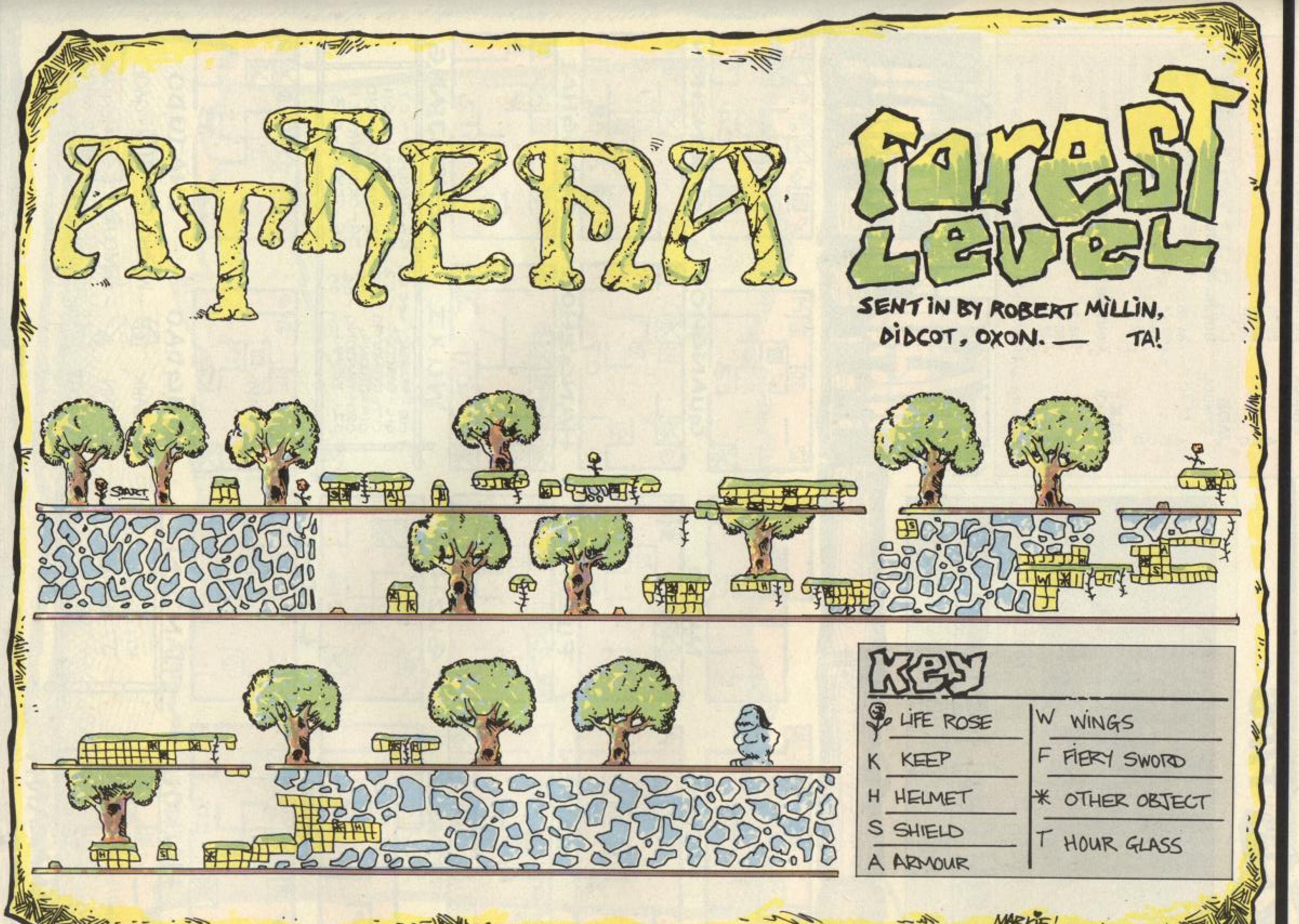
RUN the listing, press play on tape and go and make a cup of tea. When you've finished, return to the computer and you should find Thundercats loaded and ready to go, complete with an unlimited supply of felines! Wheee!

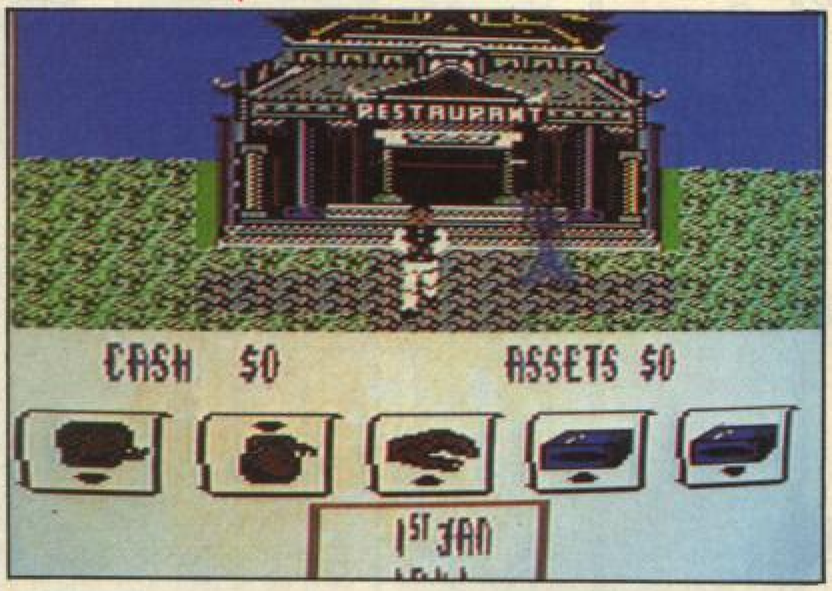
NEBULUS (Hewson)

The big news this month for Nebuloids, is that P-Man from Derbyshire has found the much-sought after Programmer's Cheat Mode (hushed gasps, stunned silence, and awe-struck muteness). It is as follows . . .

Start playing, and press pause. Hold down the UP ARROW key (next to RESTORE), followed by J, followed by BACK ARROW (top left corner). Press fire to resume play, and you'll find things much to your liking – the timer no longer counts down, lives are no longer lost, and pressing the keys 1 through to 8 takes you to the relevant towers! Should you tire of this all-too-easy practise mode, simply press the SPACE bar followed by the LEFT SHIFT key to resume normal, mortal play.

By the way, thanks and commiserations to Joe 90, who sent in some otherwise excellent POKEs for this game, but which were really eclipsed here.


ATHENA
Forest Level
SENT IN BY ROBERT MILLIN, DIDCOT, OXON. — TA!
START
KEY
LIFE ROSE
K KEEP
H HELMET
S SHIELD
A ARMOUR
W WINGS
F FIERY SWORD
* OTHER OBJECT
T HOUR GLASS
MARKIE!



KEY TO PRICE RANGES

TEA

SYMBOL	BUYING PRICE RANGE (000s of $)
A	23-25
B	25-29
C	29-31

JADE

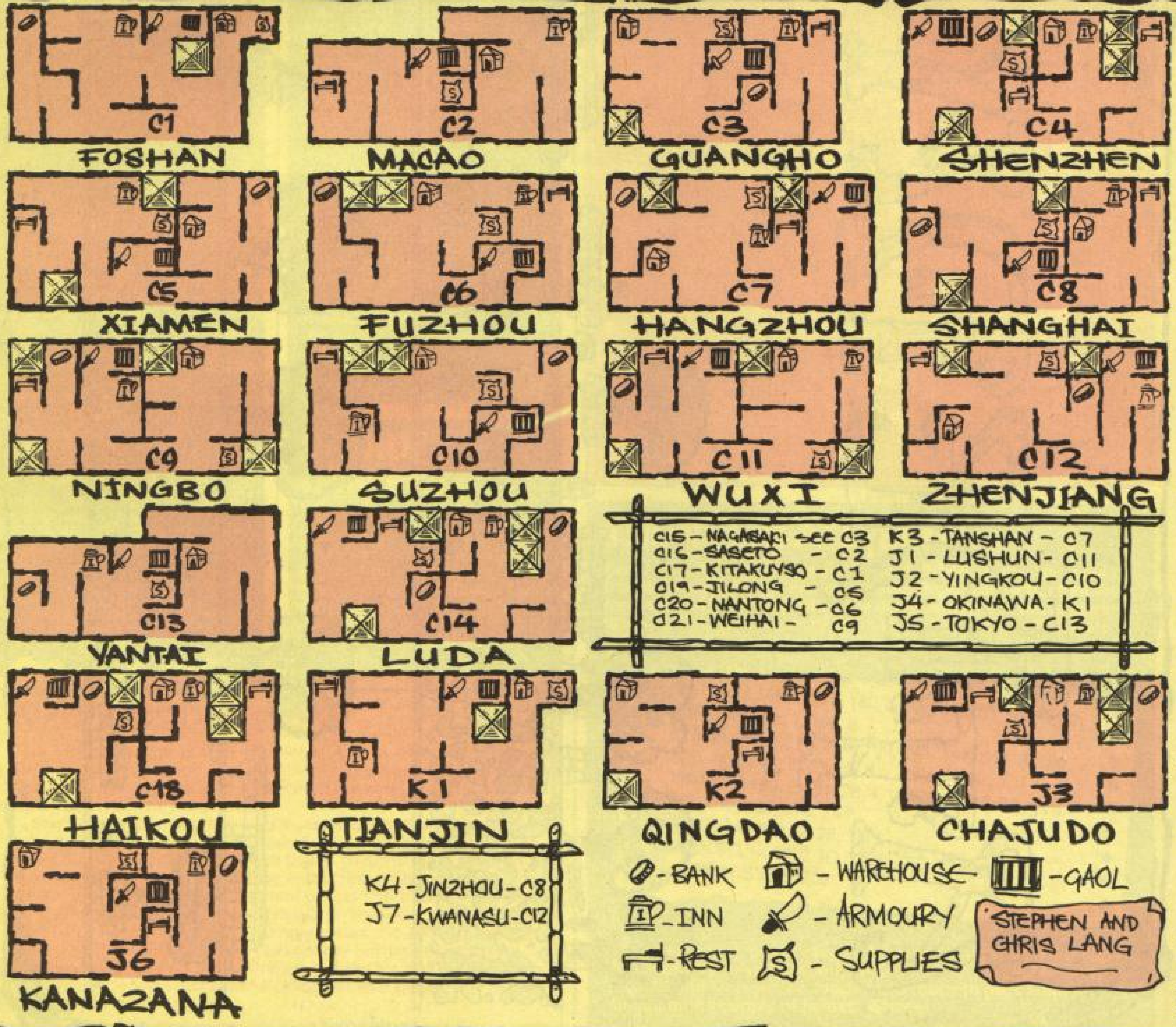
SYMBOL	BUYING PRICE RANGE (000s of $)
A	64-66
B	71-74
C	78-80
D	85-87

SILK

SYMBOL	BUYING PRICE RANGE (000s of $)
A	36-39
B	39-42
C	42-45

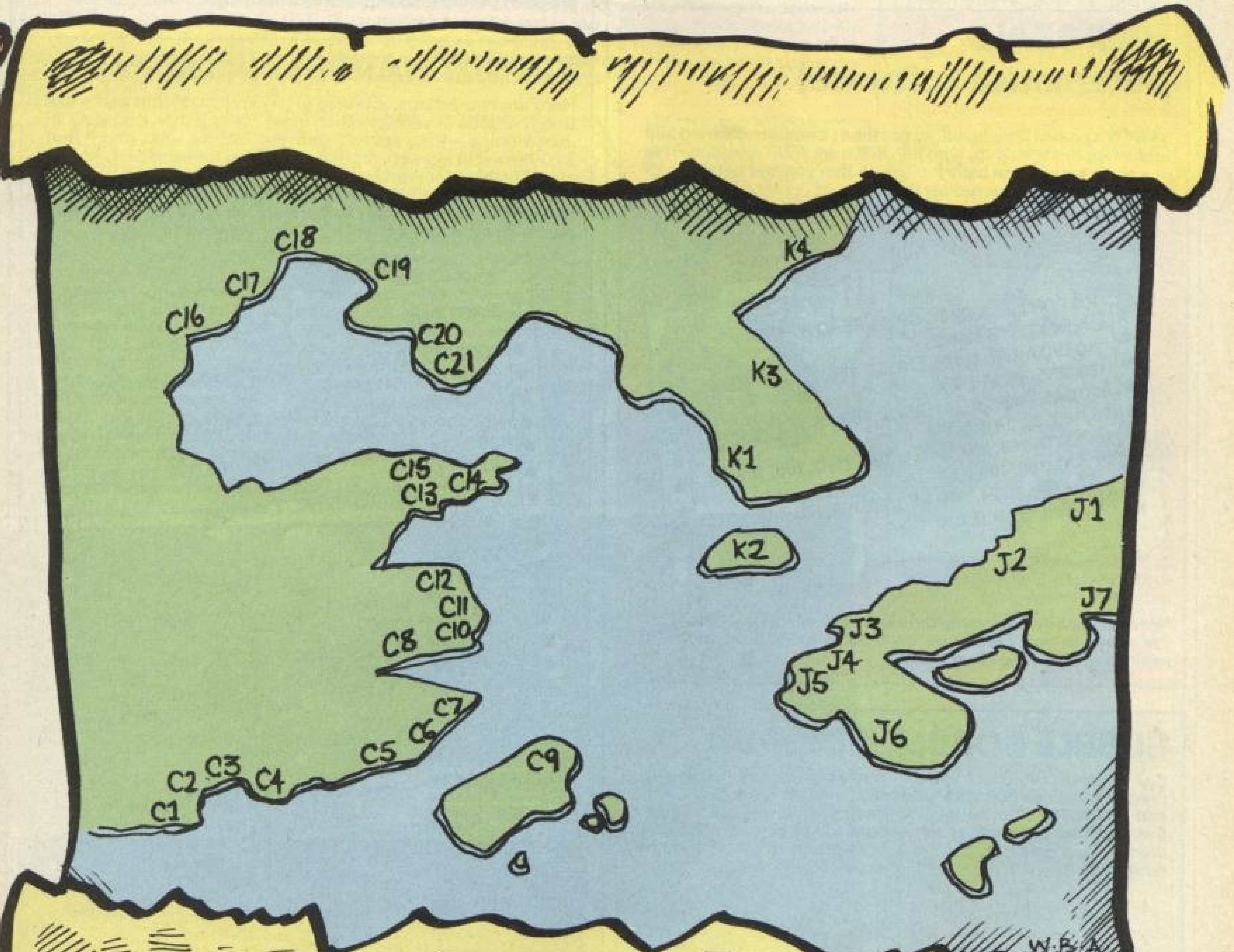
Note: the buying price is $2,000 higher than the selling price.

TAI-PAN



PRICE LIST OF GOODS

CITY NAME	NUMBER	TEA	JADE	SILK
		BUYING PRICE RANGE (SEE KEY)		
Foshan	C1	B	D	B
Macao	C2	B	D	B
Guanghou	C3	B		B
Shenzhen	C4	B	D	B
Xiamen	C5	B	D	B
Fuzhou	C6	B	D	B
Hangzhou	C7	B	D	B
Shanghai	C8	A	C	C
Ningbo	C9	B	D	B
Suzhou	C10	A	C	C
Wuxi	C11	A	C	C
Zhenjiang	C12	A	C	C
Yantai	C12	A	C	C
Luda	C14	A	C	C
Nagasaki	C15	B	A	A
Saseto	C16	B	A	A
Kitakyuso	C17	B	A	A
Haikou	C18	B	A	A
Jilong	C19	B	A	A
Nantong	C20	B	A	A
Weihai	C21	B	A	A
Tianjin	K1	A	C	C
Qingdao	K2	A	C	C
Tangshan	K3	B	A	A
Jinzhou	K4	C	B	C
Lushun	J1	C	B	C
Yingkou	J2	C	B	C
Chajudo	J3	C	B	C
Okinawa	J4	C	B	C
Tokyo	J5	C	B	C
Kanazana	J6	C	B	C
Kwangsu	J7	C	B	C



TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY (Bug Byte)

This and the Hobbit started the graphical adventure genre quite a few years ago. If you still don't get a chance to work out the puzzles before getting killed, RW Troughton has an infinite energy routine that should come in handy. First, put the rewound tape in the cassette deck, and type VERIFY (RETURN). Part one loads, and an error message appears. When it does, type LOAD "",1,1 (RETURN) and wait for the next part to load. Do this another three times. The fourth time the READY prompt appears, type LOAD (RETURN).

This routine loads the game in small parts, so that at the fifth prompt you can type POKE 3936,128 (RETURN) and RUN (RETURN) to start the adventure with infinite energy.

MICROBALL (Alternative Software)

Yeah! It's pinball time again, so get those bumpers cleaned and those flippers whizzing, with a POKE from RW Troughton. This one gives you infinite balls (oo-er), so that you can notch up an infinite score! How incredibly jolly!!

All you have to do is type in the following listing . . .

```
100 FOR L=52992 TO 53051:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 52992
110 DATA 169, 1, 168.170, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255
120 DATA 169, 26, 141, 212, 2, 169, 207, 141, 213, 2,
96, 169, 39, 141, 4, 198
130 DATA 169, 207, 141, 5, 198, 76, 0, 198, 169, 52,
141, 23, 198, 169, 207
140 DATA 141, 24, 198, 76, 0, 29, 169, 173, 141, 179,
101, 76, 0, 86, 0, 0, 0, 0
```

Now put the rewound game tape into that reliable old C2N, RUN the program and press play on tape to load the game with millions of gleaming silver things.

BUBBLE BOBBLE (Firebird)

Hail and well met to all frantically bubbling dinosaurs. If you've read all those tips that start 'just get to level thirty and then . . .', and you haven't got to level thirteen yet, Colin Gordon from Swindon has got a rather useful listing that gives you infinite credits. Just type it in, put the Bubble Bobble cassette into the deck, type RUN (RETURN), and press play on tape . . .

```
10 FOR I=12288 TO 12314
20 READ A:POKE I,A:T=T+A:NEXT
30 IF T=3169 THEN SYS 12288
40 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
50 DATA 32, 57, 245, 169, 96, 141, 253, 2
60 DATA 32, 192, 2, 169, 173, 141, 86, 101
70 DATA 141, 89, 101, 169, 165, 141, 92, 101
80 DATA 76, 176, 27
```

SARACEN (US Gold)

This aging arcade adventure, was recently re-released as a budget game by Americana. If you find it tricky, try this listing from The Kipper Man – it gives unlimited lives. Go ahead and type it in . . .

```
1 FOR L=340 TO 390:READ A:POKE L,A:NEXT
2 DATA 169, 97, 141, 236, 3, 169, 1, 141, 237, 3, 76,
13, 8, 169, 110, 141
3 DATA 189, 239, 169, 1, 141, 190, 239, 76, 0, 224,
169, 123, 141, 162, 96
4 DATA 169, 1, 141, 163, 96, 76, 0, 96, 169, 0, 141, 18,
164, 141, 75, 164
5 DATA 76, 0, 160, 0, 0
```

Place the twin spools of rewound ferric in the audio receptacle, type RUN, and press play on tape when requested to do so. The program should load with plenty of extra goodies.

FREDDY HARDEST (Imagine)

Here are two listings courtesy of RW Troughton that make this dodgy arcade adventure much more difficult than it already is. Just kidding – they actually give you infinite lives, and if that isn't terrifying enough, there's one listing for each part, so you can play them forever! Hurrah!

To get them working, just type in the relevant listing, RUN it and load the correct part as normal. The code for the second part is (in case you weren't watching last month) 24525.

```
PART ONE

100 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 32, 141, 202,
2, 169, 181, 141, 203
110 DATA 2, 169, 1, 141, 204, 2, 96, 141, 255, 255,
169, 195, 141, 136, 1
120 DATA 169, 1, 141, 137, 1, 96, 169, 173, 141, 23,
181, 76, 9, 128
130 FOR L=415 TO 458:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 415

PART TWO

100 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 32, 141, 202,
2, 169, 181, 141, 203
110 DATA 2, 169, 1, 141, 204, 2, 96, 141, 255, 255,
169, 195, 141, 136, 1
120 DATA 169, 1, 141, 137, 1, 96, 169, 173, 141, 134,
153, 76, 9, 128
130 FOR L=415 TO 458:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 415
```

So that's the end of the first month – and what a month it was. Thanks go to all who contributed this month, and made it such an enjoyable experience. Special praise goes to RW Troughton, who supplied tips above and beyond the call of duty, and so wins Newsfield's highest commendation: the TPSV (Thirty Pounds Software Voucher). Strangely enough, Mick Mills and Al, Jim, Tim and Ian Fraser, Sean and Adrian Meads and Zoltan were all conspicuous by their absence – there must be a plot afoot . . .

If you have anything in the way of POKEs, maps, tips or hints – send them in to me, Dan Gilbert, at ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. You never know – you could well find yourself in possession of a £30 software voucher!

Anyway, see you next month, and in the mean time, grab it, shake it, and if it drops off, put it back.

SIZZLER

ZZAP! TEST

HUNTER'S MOON

Thalamus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

●Martin Walker's highly colourful psychedelic space shoot 'em up

After piloting the starship 'Hunter' too close to a black hole, the player finds himself transported to a different sector of the Galaxy – a strange region filled with cellular hives, inhabited by worker cells and ruled over by shimmering star cells. The only way home is to negotiate the entire alien system and return to the black hole.

Every system is divided into levels, each containing up to three star cells. One flashes when the Hunter enters the level and yields a loopspace co-ordinate if collected within eight seconds. If the player collects four flashing cells within the time limit, he moves onto the next, more complicated system. If the time limit expires before the flashing cells are picked up, every star cell within the system has to be collected before the player progresses.

Surrounding each star cell is a deadly hive, which is blasted to allow Hunter access to the cell. However, the hive is continually monitored and reconstructed by the worker cells who traverse the structures. Worker cells are invincible and cause the ship to explode on contact, and they also release spores which are similarly dangerous. The Hunter has three shields which offer protection from spores, but are only effective for one level.

Between each system is a bonus screen where the player protects the Hunter from attacking cells who shoot spores. An extra shield is awarded on entering loopspace, and successfully fending off all attackers rewards the player with an another ship.

A drop-down menu may be accessed during play, and allows the player to change the engine (there are three, each giving a different control method), alter the colour of the ship and initiate the loopspace trainer, which presents a controllable light-show of psychedelic *Colourspace*-style patterns.

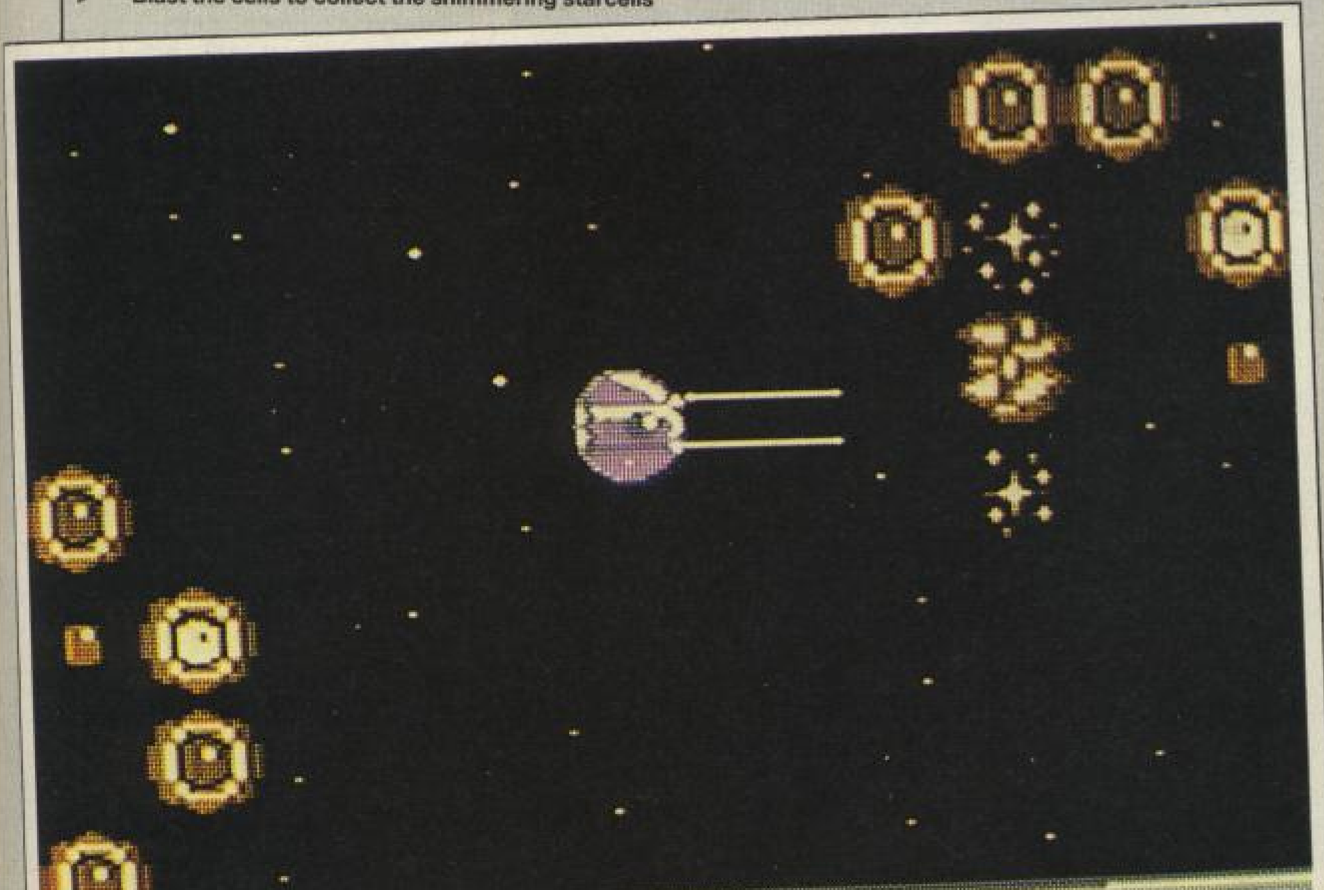
I'm always a sucker for shoot 'em ups, especially when they're as good-looking, innovative and as challenging as this. The gameplay is unusual, and requires a mixture of quick reflexes, lateral thinking, co-ordination and shooting to survive. Although the going is tough, the action is very, very rewarding and keeps you coming back for more – especially when you discover a new part of the alien star system. The graphics are superlative throughout, with stunning use of colour, and the effects and sprites are simply incredible – the psychedelic patterns between waves and in the 'Off Duty' mode are fabulous. The sound is also excellent, and the whole program is superbly presented. Martin Walker must have stretched his imagination to its limits programming Hunter's Moon **– buy it and stretch yours.**



Martin Walker had a tough act to follow with Stavros Fasoulas' first Thalamus releases, but he's managed a first class job with Hunter's Moon. **The strong initial appeal lies in the gorgeous graphics, which are extremely effective and a real pleasure to watch – especially in the loopspace trainer mode. The use of colour throughout is superb: on many occasions it appears that the 64 is supporting more shades than possible! I was also surprised by the speed at which everything moves: the loopspace sub-game is brilliantly hectic! The overall gameplay is fairly simple, but each level requires a subtly different strategy – later levels provide mazes and puzzles rather than straightforward blasting.** Hunter's Moon **is wonderfully presented (although the instructions are a little lacking) and should present a tough and lasting challenge.**



▶ **Blast the cells to collect the shimmering starcells**



PRESENTATION 92%
A huge list of options and superb in-game presentation. The instructions are a little confusing, though.

GRAPHICS 96%
Stunning cellular constructions, with superlative use of colour.

SOUND 87%
Great title track with some lovely, atmospheric sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 88%
The game *is* difficult at first, but the control can be altered to suit, and the lure to continue is strong.

LASTABILITY 89%
Plenty of long-term entertainment, with 128 levels to conquer.

OVERALL 92%
An unusual puzzle/shoot 'em up, which may not appeal to everyone, but comes recommended nonetheless.

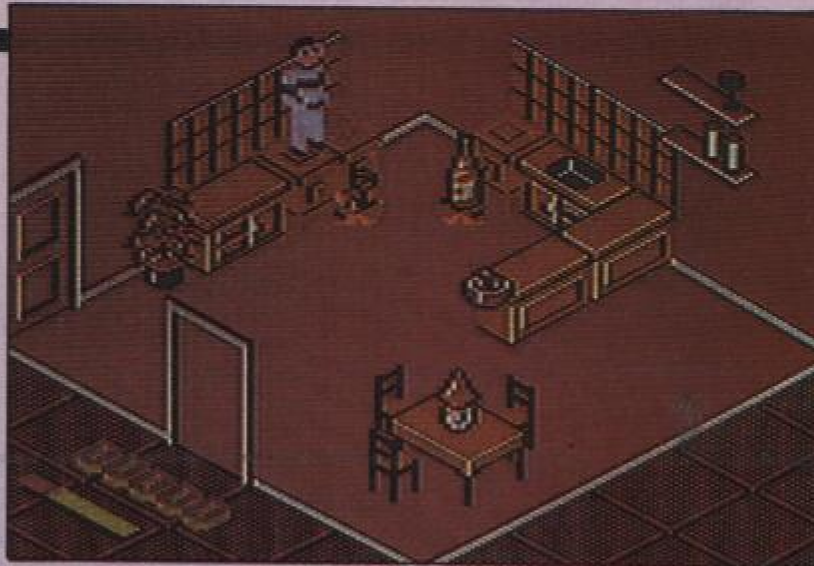
INSIDE OUTING

The Edge, £9.99 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

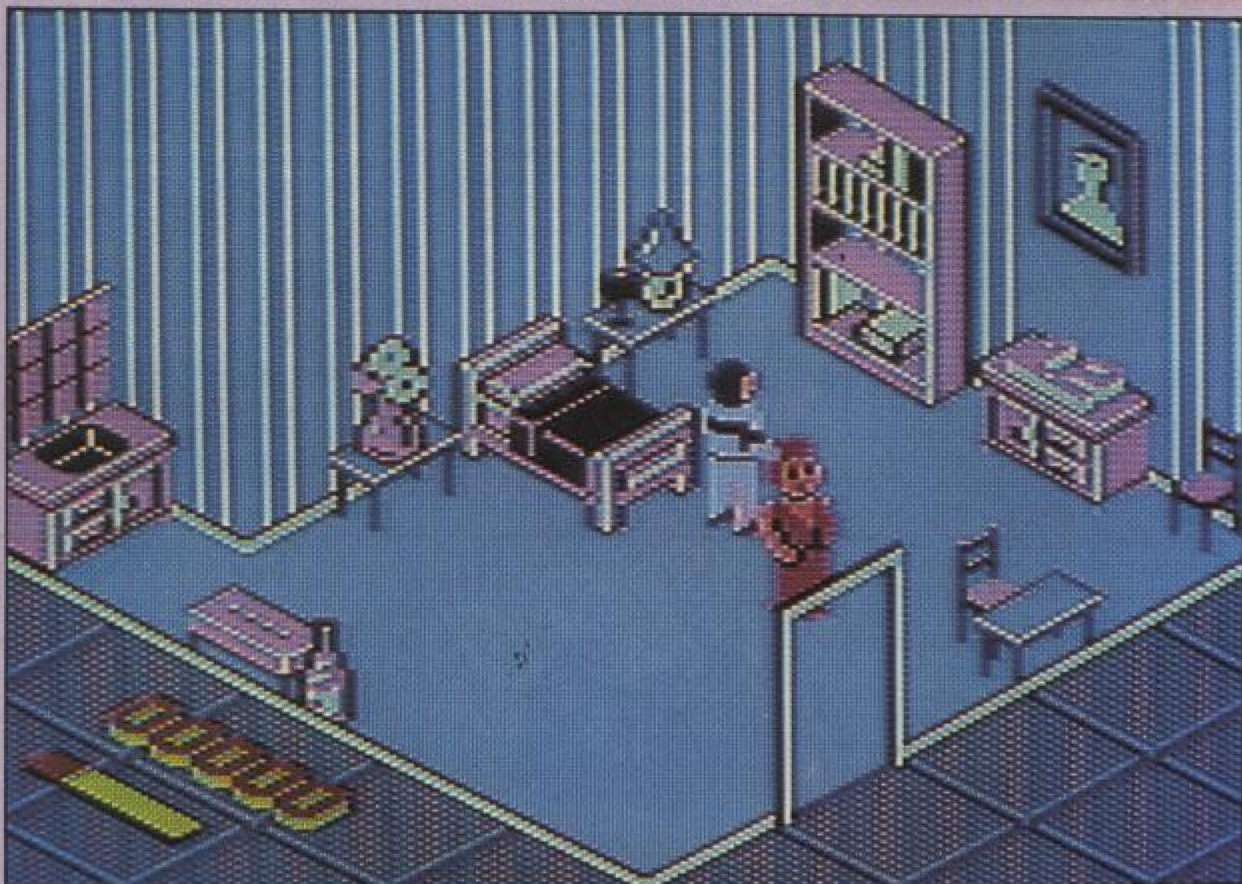
Old man Crutcher has died, leaving his widow all alone in the big old house on the hill. By all accounts, Lady Crutcher should now be stinking rich, but the old man never trusted banks, and left his untold riches hidden within the building.

The player takes the role of a master criminal whom the old lady has lured to the house in order to find the hidden jewels. Seeing the chance to make off with a gem or two himself, he agrees to her strange request . . .

The action is displayed in 3D isometric perspective. Most objects and furnishings that



▲ Looks like old Man crutcher was an alcoholic, judging by the amount of bottles lying around!



▲ Lady Crutcher's tastefully decorated boudoir



There are very few effective 3D arcade adventures on the 64, the only notable exceptions being Head Over Heels **and** Nosferatu. **The Edge's latest game redresses the balance somewhat, and also provides a more colourful (if at times rather gaudy) adventure. Speed of movement is quite rapid, and new locations are drawn with reasonable speed. The 3D is very effective, with objects and furnishings all appearing to exist within the confines of the game, which is itself quite entertaining. I do have doubts about its lasting appeal, however – each room presents puzzles of rather similar nature, and it is rather difficult. Recommended for seasoned adventurers only.**



The arcade adventure genre has become a little stagnant over the past few months, so Inside Outing **comes as a breath of fresh air. The action is displayed in very fast isometric perspective 3D, and although the colours used on the backdrops and household items are gaudy, a convincing 3D environment is conveyed. The main character moves around smoothly, and is able to interact with an incredible array of items, giving a great feeling of freedom within the game's environment. The puzzles require quite a lot of lateral thought, and it takes quite a lot of hard work to recover the first jewel. Even though the going is difficult, the action remains absorbing, and discovering the location of a new jewel is very rewarding indeed.** Inside Outing **is both engrossing and worthwhile – if you're an arcade adventurer check it out.**



▼ Beware the mega mouse

appear are moved by pushing or dragging them. Smaller items are picked up and used to stand on, giving rise to some of the more inaccessible areas of the rooms.

There are 12 gems concealed about the house, which are collected individually and taken to Lady Crutcher, who resides in her boudoir during the game.

The task is made more complex by the appearance of old Man Crutcher's failed experiments: giant canaries and mutant mice hinder progress by reducing the character's energy, displayed as a diminishing bar. Only one life is provided, so a total loss of energy signals the end of the game.

Escape from the house is possible only when all 12 gems have been retrieved.



The Edge are certainly making a come-back, what with RISK **last month, and now** Inside Outing**. At first, my lack of progress was offputting, but then I found some of the neat details which the programmers have incorporated into the game, like the bonus points awarded after collecting the phone when it rings. By the time I had found my first jewel I was beginning to realise two things: firstly, the game has plenty of depth, and secondly, I was growing to like it. The slow speed of the action detracts from the playability slightly, as does the difficulty imposed by the dogged accuracy of the mice and the canaries. On the whole though, I would recommend this, especially to arcade-adventure aficionados.**

PRESENTATION 64%
Intentionally sparse instructions, with useful pause and restart options. The omission of a game save is particularly frustrating.

GRAPHICS 81%
Effective backdrops and sprites, marred only by the somewhat gaudy colour schemes.

SOUND 62%
Reasonable title track, but few spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 80%
Exploration is a strong lure, although the first couple of attempts don't last very long.

LASTABILITY 83%
There are plenty of rooms to map out, mysteries to discover and gems to find.

OVERALL 85%
A difficult but enjoyable arcade adventure.

VENGEANCE

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

A fleet of powerful alien ships is terrorising the Galaxy, which lies submissive but for one pilot. In an attempt to inflict as much damage as possible before his inevitable demise, the solitary hero prepares to pit his own vessel against the might of the entire alien fleet.

The player is the pilot and begins his mission at the edge of the alien armada, which scrolls vertically downwards. The small fighter has a simple cannon which is effective against enemy vessels and installations, the destruction of which occasionally renders an equipment pod which is collected to enhance the ship's performance.

Available pods include added speed, increased firepower, extra ships (to add to the initial five), bonus points and energy. The last of these is required for teleporting a remote droid aboard each of the eight types of enemy ships encountered. Each ship contains a secret engine component which is required to complete the mission.

The teleport sequence is initiated by pressing the space bar and selecting 'board ship' from the pull-down menu that appears. The action freezes and a cursor appears, which is used to select the intended enemy vessel. When a ship is selected, a service droid is beamed into the 3D confines of the alien ship and explores the maze-like interior.

The player guides the droid around to find the hidden equipment, while avoiding or blasting guardian aliens. Play returns to the shoot 'em up section when either a component is found, the droid is killed or the available energy runs out.

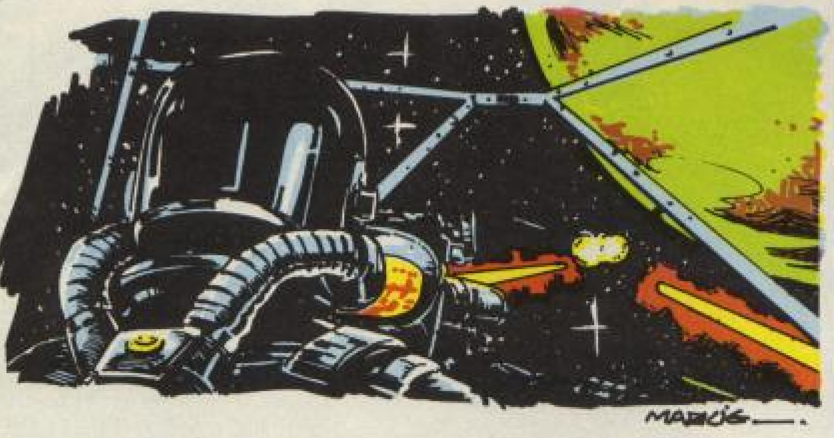
The player's mission concludes successfully when all eight engine sections have been found, and the remaining fleet is successfully negotiated.



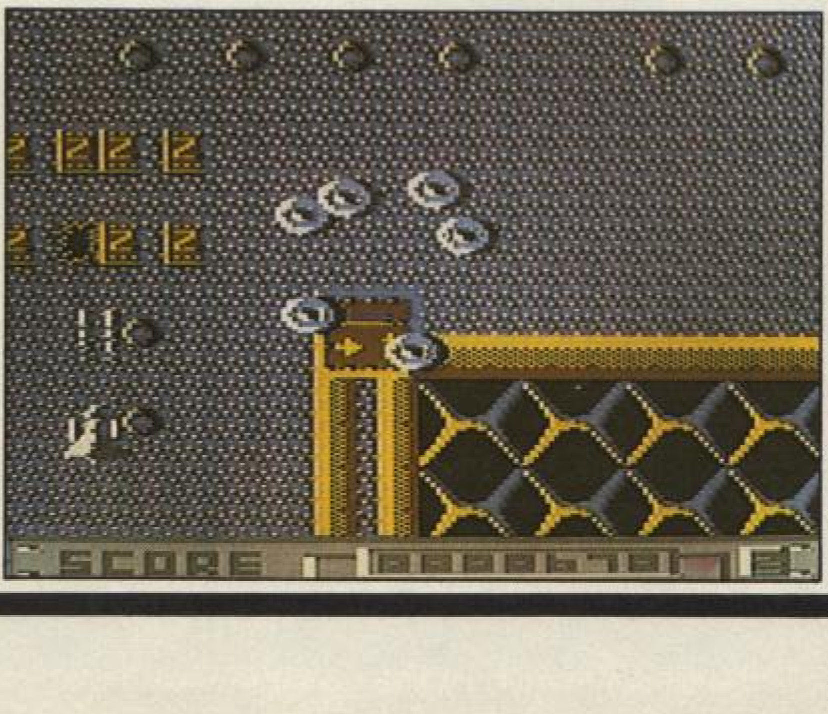
Surely one of the most popular game formats in recent times is the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. CRL has tried to give a new twist to the story by introducing a 3D exploration/puzzle section. However, it doesn't quite work, as both pieces of action are frustrating. The shoot 'em up for its surprise factor – you can die in an instant, and the puzzle for its difficulty – it's very hard to complete it within the allotted time limit. Combine this with strangely awkward progressive weapons and some bland graphics and sound, and the game ends up with a high 'table factor' (this is the object that's violently assaulted by fist or joystick halfway through the game). Not a fun game. Not worth the money. Not to be bought.



The latest addition to the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up genre attempts to inject some variety into the gameplay, but only manages to complicate matters. Vengeance **is very reminiscent of** Firetrack **in its graphic style, but there the similarity ends. There are too many annoying aspects to make it a truly worthwhile proposition, which is a shame since the game's promise is quite substantial. To enhance your ship you blast icons, and quite often the pod scrolls down the other side of the screen where you can't reach it! Alien swarms often appear without giving the player time to move, which is infuriating. The maze section is also incredibly difficult: the mazes are quite large, so you need to collect an awful lot of energy to stand any chance of even mapping the thing, let alone actually finding a component.** Vengeance **is slightly addictive, but it's addiction borne of frustration and the desire not to beaten, rather than simply having a good time.**



► CRL's frustratingly difficult progressive shoot 'em up, *Vengeance*



PRESENTATION 79%
Good all round, including a restart option and large high score table.

GRAPHICS 78%
The colourful backdrops and sprites are let down by a poor main ship.

SOUND 56%
Average tune, but the spot effects are fairly good.

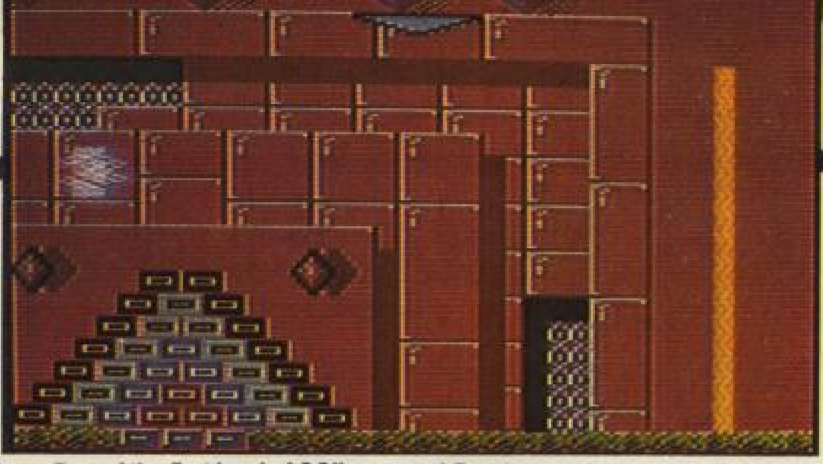
HOOKABILITY 65%
Straightforward blasting, but the high difficulty level is very offputting.

LASTABILITY 44%
Frustration should arrive long before the end of the game.

OVERALL 53%
An uninspiring and infuriating shoot 'em up which fails to realise its potential.

JINKS

GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys



► Part of the first level of GO!'s unusual *Breakout* variant, *Jinks*

There are two GO!/Rainbow Arts games this month. One is *Bad Cat* (reviewed elsewhere) and the other is *Jinks*, a horizontally scrolling *Breakout* variant.

The objective is to direct a small ball across the landscape to the goal at the far right. The interim landscape contains many hazards, including static barriers which hamper progress, and moving objects which damage the bat on contact, decreasing its size or destroying it completely. There are also one-way walls which allow the ball to pass in one direction but stop it returning, blocks which disappear on contact with the ball and panels which reward the player with specific items when hit: extra bats, extra balls or bonus scores.

When the ball has been successfully guided into the goalmouth, the 'interlude' screen is entered. A ball and small bat appear, together with four panels labelled in numerical order. Access to the next level is dependent upon which panel is first to be hit by the ball, allowing the player some control over his immediate destiny.

The four landscapes are



Don't be fooled by the screen shots and scenario on the packaging. This shoot 'em up lookalike is simply an unusual, and quite innovative, Breakout **variant (more of a Breakalong, really). The game is nicely presented with a lovely options screen, and very polished. It has smart graphics and the music, which is unusually tuneful, uses some great voices. Co-ordinating bat and ball is rather tricky at first, but the way in which the ball bounces is very realistic and once mastered,** Jinks **provides quite an entertaining pastime – for a while, at least. Addiction soon wears off due to the limited amount of landscapes, and the lack of a distinct end game also does nothing to promote play.**



To its credit, Jinks **sports some lovely bas-relief backdrops and has a great soundtrack, but unfortunately the good impressions are dispelled in the light of play. The gameplay is very tedious and involves chasing the ball up and down the horizontally scrolling landscape. I never felt I had control over what was going on, and that success was dependent on luck rather than skill. It's so frustrating to bash the ball all the way down one end of the landscape, and watch it career past the bat all the way back to the other end. I ended up feeling like I was playing piggy-in-the-middle between two large basketball players! I definitely wouldn't feel too happy spending a tenner on** Jinks.



My immediate reaction was surprise at how original the game idea is – but it soon became apparent that what we have here is another boring bat 'n' ball game. I have nothing against such games, but when they're as repetitive and simple as this I start to become concerned. The implementation is great – nice presentation, colourful backgrounds, realistic bounces and the like – but the action holds no long-lasting appeal due to it's small play areas and pointless sub-stage – in fact it has very little overall content. Not recommended.

MASK II

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Barely rested after their last exploits, the MASK team are back in action again. This time the five-man team are needed to help out in three missions of international importance against their eternal enemies, VENOM.

The action starts at the MASK headquarters in Boulder Hill, where the player is given the choice of three missions: Desert, VENOM Base (set in the Middle East) or Jungle. Three members of MASK are chosen for the mission, and the selected scenario is loaded.



► Matt Trakker makes like Eddie Kidd in *Mask II*



All three scenes are horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups in which



MASK I had flaws, but at least it also had variation and a fair degree of playability. MASK II has very little playability and isn't at all enjoyable. The game graphics are rubbish, and control is unpleasant, since you're under constant siege from an enormous quantity of enemies. Consequently, you tend to die quickly, or spend time searching for a 'safe' spot.



When producing a sequel, you surely take a good look at the original subject matter, find its bad points and make improvements accordingly. With MASK II **I think Gremlin went about the task backwards.** MASK I **wasn't brilliant, but was entertaining and worthwhile.** MASK II **is absolutely terrible – has bugs and looks pathetic. The plot shows an alarming lack of imagination, and the gameplay is devoid of originality. Guiding the agents across the landscape isn't at all thrilling, and the repetitive nature of the action and lack of immediate reward soon leads to boredom. If you're a MASK fan, forget this and buy** MASK I.



After a series of very good games, Gremlin release MASK II **onto an unsuspecting world. It's unpolished, unprofessional and unplayable. The graphics are of a stunningly low quality, considering what Gremlin are capable of, while the gameplay is ridiculously simplistic, and not particularly enthralling. There's little else to do other than blast the enemy and switch between craft when necessary – not a terribly taxing routine. The animation on both the main sprite and the enemy craft is very poor, while the movement of the vehicle across the ground is reminiscent of early Spectrum days. The whole game has a terribly 'unfinished' feel to it, and the final nail in the coffin is the asking price. MASK fans should steer well clear.**

increasingly difficult to complete and once the fourth has been negotiated, all four levels are made more hazardous by the inclusion of alien creatures, contact with which is fatal.

PRESENTATION 84%
Plenty of options available from the superbly polished menu screen.

GRAPHICS 82%
Pleasantly coloured and detailed backdrops and some effective sprites.

SOUND 89%
Great title music and sampled speech, good sound effects during the game and plenty of classy jingles.

HOOKABILITY 62%
The fiddly control method is very offputting, and the action is limited.

LASTABILITY 46%
Once all four landscapes have been attempted, the urge to continue soon fades.

OVERALL 48%
An original idea, sadly lacking substance.

the player guides the heroes across the landscape. Each member of the team has his own special vehicle which can alter its form to fly or travel across water, so the player switches between the three as conditions dictate.

In each scenario the player has a task to complete, including the recovery of a missile to destroy the VENOM base, or a stolen ruby. No time limit exists, and levels can be replayed on failure of completion.

PRESENTATION 53%
The abort feature and level replay are useful options, but the multiload process is long and tedious.

GRAPHICS 32%
Poorly defined and animated sprites, which fail to respond to the landscape.

SOUND 56%
Reasonable title tune, but poor effects.

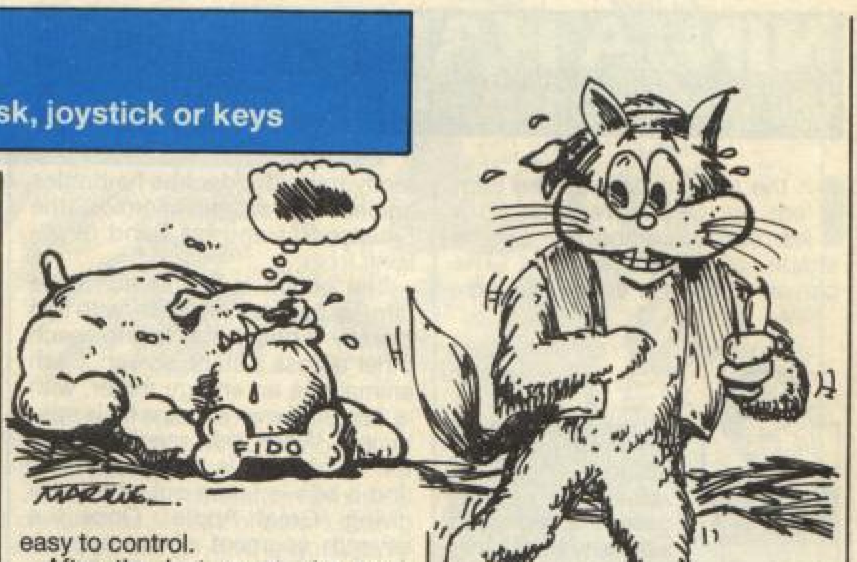
HOOKABILITY 45%
Very simplistic, and lacks excitement.

LASTABILITY 34%
The three scenarios are all very similar, and generate very little lasting interest.

OVERALL 36%
A poor sequel to *MASK*, which totally fails to convince or entertain in anything other than the very short term.

BAD CAT

GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys



The year is 1984 and the feline equivalent of the Olympic Games are about to take place.

The player takes the part of Bad Cat – a street-wise Tom who travels around the city, competing in the game's four events.

The first venue is the city park, where Bad Cat walks, crawls, jumps and somersaults his way across a hazard-filled course. At the finish he collects a set of keys, allowing him to start a motorcycle which carries him to other venues around the city.

Between events, a local map of LA appears with the feline motorcyclist appearing as a small yellow dot. The next location is displayed as a red pulsing circle, and Bad Cat is guided across the landscape, avoiding the patrolling police cars to reach the next venue. Success is rewarded with a bonus, and beach balls are collected along the way to increase score.

The second game takes place in an open air swimming pool. The hero jumps between two floating 'bumpers' while trying to punch geometric figures from a board at the top of the screen. A large display shows the next target and the score mounts as the shapes are successfully dislodged.

A sewer is the unlikely setting for the third event, where Bad Cat negotiates water and falling blocks. Again, rotating balls are balanced upon, and attacking rats are kicked and punched into the murky stream.

Bad Cat faces his final challenge in a pub, where he plays a head-to-head 'bowling' match against a bulldog. Standing on opposing sides of a five-lane alley, both contestants hit each other with bowling balls. Every time a character is hit, he goes to the bar and drinks a glass of beer, making him less easy to control.

After the last event, the total scores are displayed and the game ends.



The average graphics and average animation are ruined by the awful control methods – balancing on the ball is very hard, and often the slightest mistake spells doom to the hero. The main character is neither cute nor appealing, being a curious combination of an arthritic homo erectus and a grey semi-feline blob. The pointless interludes where you guide a tediously uncontrollable and slow cursor (your cat?) around a blocky map backdrop in search of a flashing red spot provided my greatest excitement: getting squashed by a car that was as well-drawn as those in Grand Prix Simulator. **There is nothing new to inspire, nor anything particularly brilliant to draw you back – unless you like staring at title screens.**



This latest German offering suffers from contrived and unrewarding gameplay and overcomplex control methods. The graphics are smart, and the package is well presented, but polish cannot begin to make up for poor playability. Only the first event really enthuses to any great degree, and even that proves annoying after a short while due to the precision required to complete the whole course. Thereafter, the events simply get worse and worse, culminating with the totally pointless 'bowling' event. Defeating the computer opponent is incredibly easy: just stay in one lane and bowl continuously. That's it – game over. To be fair, Bad Cat **isn't completely worthless: the badly translated German instructions are easily the most hilarious I have ever seen!**

► **The pool event, where Bad Cat plays a feline pinball**



PRESENTATION 71%
Supports a four player game, but is otherwise limited. The multiload is intrusive, but bearable.

GRAPHICS 72%
Colourful backdrops, but the main sprite is a little rigid in his movement.

SOUND 80%
Excellent title tune and some simplistic in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 57%
Moderately addictive to begin with, but the awkward controls ruin the enjoyment.

LASTABILITY 27%
Once the events have been completed, the desire to return is minimal.

OVERALL 37%
A poorly implemented, limited and unrewarding multi-event package.

NINJA HAMSTER

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

In the twilight days of the beat 'em up, CRL have released a less serious combat game in the shape of *Ninja Hamster*. The player controls a small, but perfectly trained rodent as he battles against his mortal enemies, the Sinister Rat and his band of villains.



I can't understand CRL releasing this game: there are so many beat 'em ups available – many of an extremely high quality – that this mediocre effort simply disappears into the swirling morass without trace. The two characters are transparent hi-res monochrome sprites which clash badly when in close contact; you can hardly tell what moves each one is making in the writhing black mass of pixels. The game's single redeeming feature is the soundtrack, which is a punchy little oriental number and probably the best track CRL have used for ages. Still, I can't recommend the game.

The action is portrayed in the familiar beat 'em up style, with two beastly opponents facing each other across a static screen. Each animal has an energy meter, with is depleted every time a hit is sustained. When this reaches zero, the combatant is knocked down, and a bite is taken out of his life-giving 'Great Apple'. Once the seventh segment of the opposition's apple disappears, the hamster advances to the next opponent. If the hamster's apple is removed, the game ends.

The hamster has an repertoire of moves accessed by combinations of joystick positions and button presses. The moves available include a flying kick, mid-kick, ground sweep, punch, high kick, jump and duck. Energy is slowly regained all the time, so to successfully knock down an opponent, blows must be struck fairly regularly.

A two player option is provided, where the second player takes control of the villainous animals.



► The black-belt rodent cuts a swathe of destruction through the animal kingdom



CRL have tried to inject a little novelty into the fighting genre, but have failed to disguise what is basically a tired old beat 'em up. Ninja Hamster **could have been fun, but unfortunately its potential hasn't been realised. Moves are limited, and since they have to be used repeatedly to defeat the opposition, it doesn't take long for the gameplay to become tedious. The graphics are generally poor, with dull monochromatic sprites battling over a very bland backdrop – in fact the only really good thing is the surprisingly jolly oriental soundtrack. Beat 'em up fans might find some initial fun, but it doesn't take long for interest to fade.**



Although the beat 'em up boom is considered well past its prime, CRL have still released this spoof version with hopes of capturing a small area of the market left untapped. In essence, this is a great idea, and from the packaging, you might think it's a bit of a laugh. Unfortunately, the actual game is a serious, hard slog, with little to laugh about other than the look of some of the characters. On the technical side, the game is definitely mediocre, with some monochrome sprites mixing messily when overlapping, and little in the way of sound other than the title music. Fighting is fairly routine, and doesn't have enough variation in moves to promote lengthy combat.

CLEVER AND SMART

Ariolasoft, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick and keys

In the latest game from German software house, Magic Bytes, a solo player directs the two eponymous detectives around town in search of the missing scientist, Dr Bacterius.



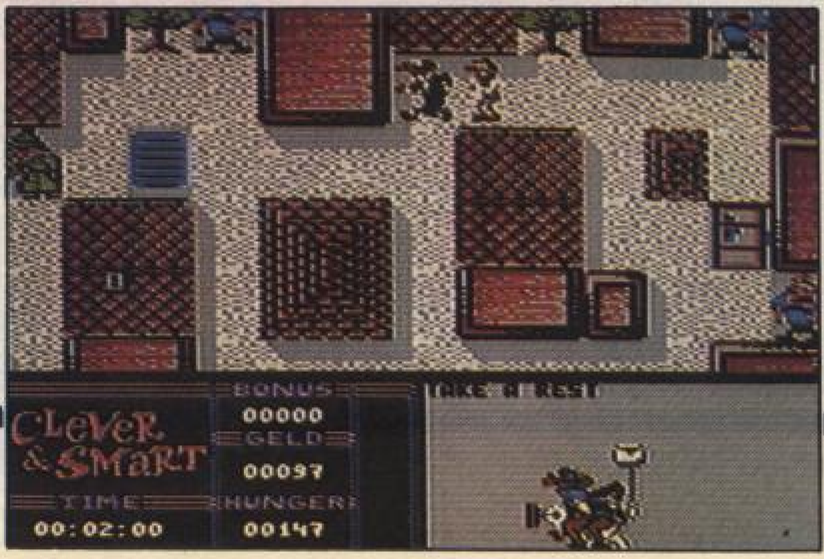
It's very difficult to translate jokes from one language to another, and Clever and Smart **painfully illustrates the fact. It might be side-splittingly funny in German, but in incredibly badly translated English it's obscure and arcane. Playability is almost zero, due partly to the totally confusing plot, and the pathetic instructions and boring gameplay only serve to make things worse. Wandering around the town is a frequently fruitless occupation, since it takes ages to find anything and even longer to actually work out how to utilise them. A couple of sessions was all I could stomach before switching the computer off.**

The town is viewed from above, and is displayed as a four-way scrolling maze of streets, houses, trees and shops. Clever and Smart run through the streets in tandem, examining people, objects and buildings to obtain information about the missing professor.

A complex sewerage system runs beneath the town, and the pair can enter the labyrinth from gratings on the surface. The underground tunnel network holds distribution boxes where, if they have the correct equipment, the twosome can listen in on people's telephone conversations.

A number of sub-games also appear within the main plot, enabling the duo to obtain money for food, disguises and equipment to aid their quest. These include snail-racing (an abstract betting game-cum-joystick waggler), coin

► On the trail of a kidnapped scientist – Clever and Smart look neither . . .





German programmers seem to operate on a totally different wavelength to everyone else, judging from the efforts we have received this month. Clever and Smart **is by far the weirdest: the whole game appears to be a German in-joke, filled with obscure statements and unusual references – examining telephone boxes is often rewarded with, 'Beware! Bomb-throwers'. Hmmm. Prudish people should also beware the bad language which advises Grandma to go forth and multiply! My major gripe is that cars are almost impossible to avoid, and since there are only two lives to play with, a game is often over very quickly. Forget it.**



The package gets off to a poor start with some appalling instructions, which aren't only badly translated from the German, but also fail to explain much about the gameplay. Then the game itself begins, with a couple of jerky, badly animated characters bumping their way around the screen. Once you've worked out all the controls and what it is you're actually trying to achieve, you realise that there's nothing to sustain interest. The sub-games are primitive and seem to bear little relation to the main objective, and the remnants of German phrases and the obscene messages that crop up occasionally are just signs of amateurism. I have to advise you not to bother with this – it's just badly-produced rubbish.



PRESENTATION 80%
One or two players plus optional keyboard control.

GRAPHICS 39%
Poorly defined sprites battle it out across an incredibly bland backdrop.

SOUND 72%
A totally clichéd, but enjoyably boppy soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 48%
Simple to play, but the action fails to grab from the outset.

LASTABILITY 25%
Each character takes ages to defeat, and the action severely lacks variety.

OVERALL 39%
A poor beat 'em up which falls far short of its potential.

throwing, signature forging, cable mending, and bomb defusion.

Only two lives are provided during the game – one for each character – and are lost either through terminal hunger, which is aggravated by being beaten up by 'heavies', or on collision with cars that appear at intervals. However, hunger may be fended off by frequent visits to one of the Chinese takeaways.

PRESENTATION 51%
Generally good, but spoilt by the badly translated instructions and confusing in-game messages.

GRAPHICS 45%
Bland throughout, with blocky sprites and unimaginative backdrops.

SOUND 47%
Bearable title track and a few decent sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 38%
The distinct lack of immediate action and the confusing gameplay leads to initial disinterest.

LASTABILITY 25%
There's nothing to excite, and the urge to return is minimal.

OVERALL 24%
A confusing, inadequate and overpriced arcade adventure.

FIRETRAP

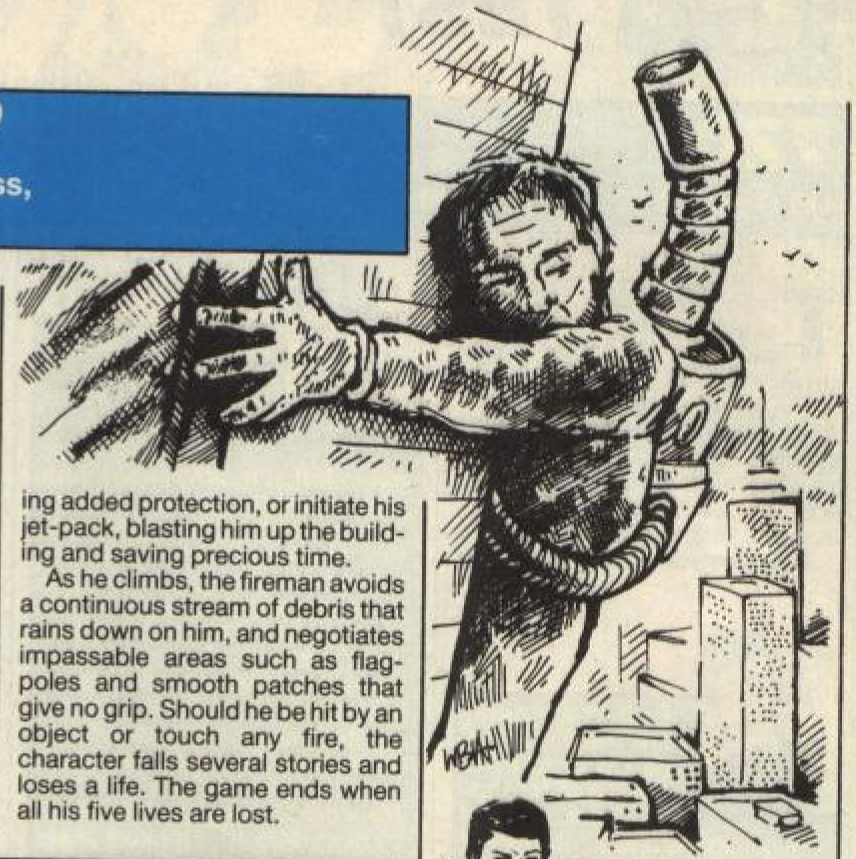
Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

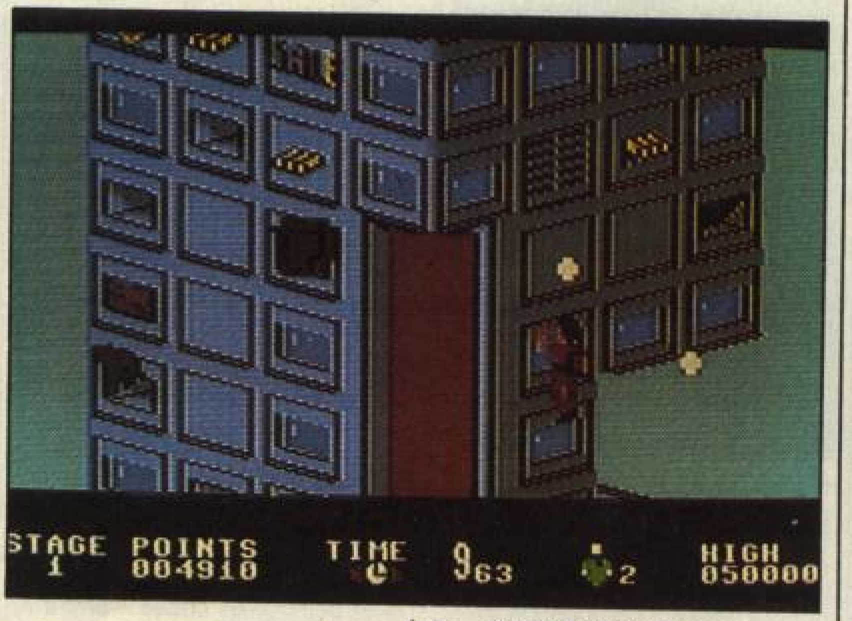
There's a burning skyscraper down on Arcadeville's main street, and the fire is spreading to the neighbouring blocks.

The player takes control of a firefighter who is sent to put out the blaze. The hero starts at the base of the first tower equipped only with a fire-resistant suit, jet-pack and water cannon, and climbs up the vertically scrolling building.

Women and dogs are trapped in the conflagration, and are rescued when touched, the hero supplying them with a parachute so they may float to safety. He also extinguishes fires with his cannon, revealing either a cash bonus or a bonus icon. These endow him with the ability to fire horizontally, giving added protection, or initiate his jet-pack, blasting him up the building and saving precious time.

As he climbs, the fireman avoids a continuous stream of debris that rains down on him, and negotiates impassable areas such as flagpoles and smooth patches that give no grip. Should he be hit by an object or touch any fire, the character falls several stories and loses a life. The game ends when all his five lives are lost.





▶ It's the Towering Inferno – without Paul Newman



This has to be one of the most obscure arcade conversions to appear this year (I for one have never seen it), but nevertheless Electric Dreams have a reasonable game on their hands. It's by no means brilliant, but the simple gameplay is immediately endearing and it has a strangely addictive quality. Graphically, the game is pretty poor, having blocky sprites and jerky scrolling. The buildings are also laughably bad, since it often appears that large sections of the tower are supported by the merest strips of architecture! Control of the firefighter is responsive to the point of being over-sensitive, but it's reasonably precise and quite comfortable. Nothing to go overboard about, but a fun game nonetheless.



The scenario is really weird, with the sole fireman climbing a flaming building to give dogs and women parachutes so they can safely jump to earth! Perhaps that's the way they do it in Japan . . . The objects that fall from above are pretty weird too – grand pianos, cars and the like – fires certainly have a strange effect on things! The action is both hectic and challenging, and remains thoroughly enjoyable – even though it is rather repetitive. Sometimes it's a little frustrating when fires break out beneath the fireman and he falls off, but overall Firetrap **is great. The rubbish graphics and sound are offputting, but if you like your action a little off beat, try it out.**



Firetrap reminds me vaguely of a game that was in the arcades a few years ago called Crazy Climber. **I soon found that great fun was to be had leaping around the skyscraper in typical Spiderman style, dodging objects and avoiding the sneaky bursts of flame that threaten to singe his backside. Graphically the game is pretty decent, with a chunky fireman clambering around on a very solid-looking skyscraper. Sound isn't much to write home about, though, with a rather weedy, but bearable tune playing throughout.** Firetrap **is more luke-warm than red-hot, but it's fun and that's what counts.**

PRESENTATION 61%
A nicely animated title screen, but no special options or features.

GRAPHICS 48%
Blocky graphics, and sparse animation give the game a rather rough and ready appearance.

SOUND 51%
A passable title tune is the highlight of an otherwise poor selection of noises.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Initially challenging, and the fairly unusual game design sustains interest.

LASTABILITY 70%
After a couple of skyscrapers, it all starts to look a bit familiar, but oddly enough, the game remains enjoyable.

OVERALL 74%
Looks and sounds awful, but is surprisingly entertaining.

720°

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick only

The conversion of the skateboarding arcade game, *720°*, has finally arrived from US Gold.

The player starts in 'Skate City', which is viewed in isometric perspective 3D as a multi-screen scrolling area comprised of dozens of small ramps, water-troughs, shops and skate parks.

The skateboarder has three tickets, allowing entrance to any of the four parks dotted around Skate City, and is awarded an extra one at regular point intervals.

Each of the four skate parks hosts a different competition: half-pipe stunts, in which the player attempts to score a set number of points by performing tricky manoeuvres; downhill racing over a series of ramps; slalom course, where a series of gates are negotiated, and jumps, which requires the player to skate down angled ramps and avoid water jumps.

Successful qualification in a competition – gold, silver or bronze – is rewarded with cash and bonus points, depending on the quality of the performance. All four parks are attempted before returning to any, and failure to qualify costs the player money.

Between park visits, the player performs jumps on the streets or over the ramps that litter the playing area. Each successful stunt earns the skater points, and therefore tickets. In addition, the player visits Skate City's four shops to upgrade his pads, helmet, board and shoes, effectively increasing his skills and giving higher scores for stunts.

The player's stay in the main area is restricted by a time limit. When this expires, a swarm of killer bees gives chase – and if a park isn't entered quickly, one of the skater's three lives is lost.

Included in the package is an audio tape containing music from the arcade machine.



First impressions are really good, as US Gold have managed to capture the look of the graphics, and a fair deal of the sound from the original – especially if you include the audio tape (mind you, it seems that the music quality is highly subjective, as although many rave over the soundtrack, we were all reaching for the volume within seconds). 720° also plays much like its arcade parent, and this is really where both the strengths and criticisms lie. The game has the flair and slickness associated with arcade machine, but with 720°, the original was lacking variety in play, and its conversion suffers likewise. Although there are four parks, and lots of things to jump off and spin over, after an hour or so, you find yourself playing exactly the same patterns, repeating the same exercises, and generally getting bored. This is a good conversion, but isn't a classic by any means.



I've never played the arcade game, so I can't compare the conversion to the original – but it's certainly a very good game in its own right. The action 'feels' great, and the skater is very quick to respond to the joystick, which is necessary to negotiate him around the skate park's tortuous hazards. The action is nicely structured, and I like the idea of having to keep on scoring to ensure a steady supply of tickets. The time limit is a constant worry, and trying to remember which park to skate to next, and which extra skating gear to buy keeps the gameplay bubbling along at a frantic rate. The graphics are a little sombre, lacking the bright colours normally associated with skateboarding, and some of the sprites are very blocky indeed – but the overall effect is pleasing, and the 3D convincing. The only niggling point I have is that the gameplay becomes repetitive after a while, as there are only four different things to do. Still, those who like their action fast and furious should enjoy 720°.



▶ Avoid the hunky bodybuilder in the skate park



The obvious comparisons between US Gold's and Electronic Arts' skateboarding games tend to favour EA's in the long run. 720° is a very good arcade conversion, but the starting material doesn't really hold much promise for a home computer game due to the limited variety. There are only four events, which are completed in more or less the same way every time. Unlike *Skate or Die*, there is little room for improvisation: after a while a set routine is developed and stuck to for the remainder of play. This is unfortunate, since the game is excellently designed, very smooth and quite entertaining. The worst part however, has to be the music – which is absolutely dire!

PRESENTATION 88%
Polished appearance, with a user-friendly control method. Nice inclusion of the arcade soundtrack.

GRAPHICS 67%
Smooth scrolling graphics with rather drab, but effective landscapes. The character animation isn't particularly amazing.

SOUND 53%
Lively, but aggravating version of the arcade original.

HOOKABILITY 90%
Action-packed, with a simple control method that makes it a breeze to pick up and play.

LASTABILITY 74%
The action becomes progressively harder, but play is unfortunately repetitive.

OVERALL 85%
A faithful and enjoyable conversion.

▶ Looks like Cam ought to practice his downhill




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ZZAP! TEST

RAMPARTS

GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick only

Two honourable knights, Sir Griswold and Sir Larkin, have been cursed by the Evil One, imparting them with physiques of gigantic proportions.

Greatly upset by this, the duo decide to track down the Evil One and restore their normal status by destroying his castle. However, their route is barred by the castles of many English Barons who refuse the two knights passage through their lands. In order to pass, the overgrown duo have to smash the fortresses.

The knights demolish the towers by punching holes in the walls. Once both sides of a tower have been filled with holes, it collapses in a cloud of dust.

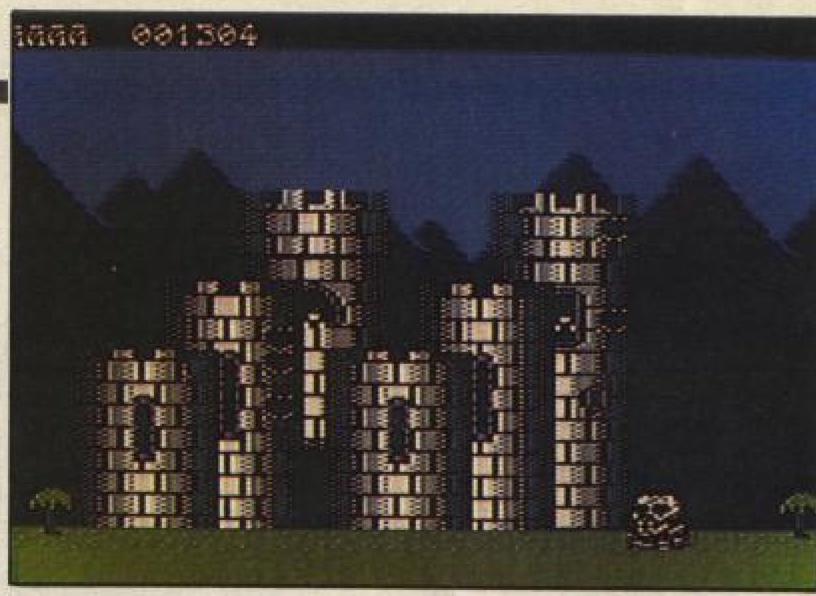
While busy erasing architecture from the landscape, the knights are assailed by peasants with cannons, fire-breathing dragons, and dive-bombing witches, all of whom fire projectiles at the armoured duo, causing damage, displayed by a diminishing yellow



I don't think Ramparts is any worse than Rampage. It has considerably less flickery graphics and a superior soundtrack. It also has a small injection of humour within the title message, and it's nice to see a game not taking itself too seriously for once. Having said that, the game is no great shakes. You're doing pretty well to get to the third or fourth screen within an hour's play – and to be honest you're doing pretty well to play it for an hour, as the action is nothing if not repetitive. I wouldn't say this was the worst game of all time, but it doesn't exactly push back the frontiers of gaming, and I'd seriously question its value for money.



The official conversion of Rampage is nothing special – but it's an awful lot better than Ramparts. The a fiddly control method and the difficulty encountered in avoiding enemy sprites are two things that constantly niggle. The crux of the problem lies in the gameplay – which is very, very repetitive. The one player mode is boring, with just a single knight smashing his way through the screen – at least Rampage supplies a couple of computer-controlled chums to add a little variety. At a tenner, Ramparts is vastly overpriced – if you must have a Rampage game, you might as well buy the real thing.



► **Have a smashing time with *Ramparts***



The cleverly-titled Ramparts suffers from the same problems as Activision's offering: limited gameplay and a restrictive control method. Rampage, however, had the redeeming features of some great sound effects, a three-player mode and computer controlled monsters which the GO! effort is sadly lacking. Without these, the game is unexciting and generally lacklustre. Ramparts seems a little more polished than its predecessor, and the graphics are on a par, but of the two, I'd go for Rampage – it's simply more fun.

EYE

Prism, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

The computer version of *Eye* follows the structure and content of the board game, but provides a computer opponent to pit your wits against.



The Eye packaging is certainly the best I've ever seen on a computer game – but unfortunately the game itself is dire. The graphics are very bland, and there's absolutely no feeling of movement when the spirals are twiddled. It's very easy to beat the computer opponents (two people did it first go), and there's nothing to sustain interest or excitement. Replace the computer opponents with real people, and things get a little more exciting – but in that case, why not buy the real game, which is better packaged and only a few pounds dearer? As a computer game Eye is a pretentious, dull and overpriced 'concept'.



The unusual board game might be the 'game of the decade' (I personally have thoughts to the contrary) but I soon became bored with this version. The main disadvantage with Eye is that you cannot see the spirals move around the board, which makes the game very confusing to follow – most early victories were more courtesy of lady luck than anything else! There's a distinct sequence of moves which may be used against a solo computer opponent, enabling you to win almost every time without fail. And not only is the computer easy to beat, but it's also a poor strategist, making moves that allow the other computer players to win. Without a decent on-board opponent, this version is pretty superfluous – you may as well buy the board game and call rent-a-friend.



The action is played on a 'board' of 32 coloured sections, formed by two opposing sets of spirals lying within a circle. Rotating the spirals creates a shifting Moiré pattern and causes different coloured sections to appear in one of four set patterns.

To win the game, a player must place a specified number of counters in the corresponding colour sections on the board. The number of counters used depends upon the number of players, and

► **The main playing screen from *Eye***



bar. The knights repair damage by eating the packages of food that occasionally appear.

When all the castle's towers have been destroyed, both knights move on to the next, more difficult screen. The action continues until the participating knights have sustained a fatal amount of damage.

PRESENTATION 78%
A variety of useful options and generally well laid out.

GRAPHICS 67%
Pleasant metal-effect towers with merely average sprites.

SOUND 66%
Suitably mediaeval tunes, and a few raucous sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 58%
Initial destruction is fun, but even the two player game has only moderate appeal.

LASTABILITY 35%
Destroying one castle is much the same as another, so completing the game is a less than inspiring prospect.

OVERALL 48%
A very straightforward *Rampage* clone which isn't as enjoyable as the official conversion.

the program accounts for between one and four participants, either human or electronic.

PRESENTATION 80%
Great packaging, and the game is well set out – the computer opponents are very poor, though.

GRAPHICS 41%
The graphics are simple, clear and functional.

SOUND 54%
Raucous beeps and blips signal the completion of manoeuvres or the inability to move spirals. Average title tune.

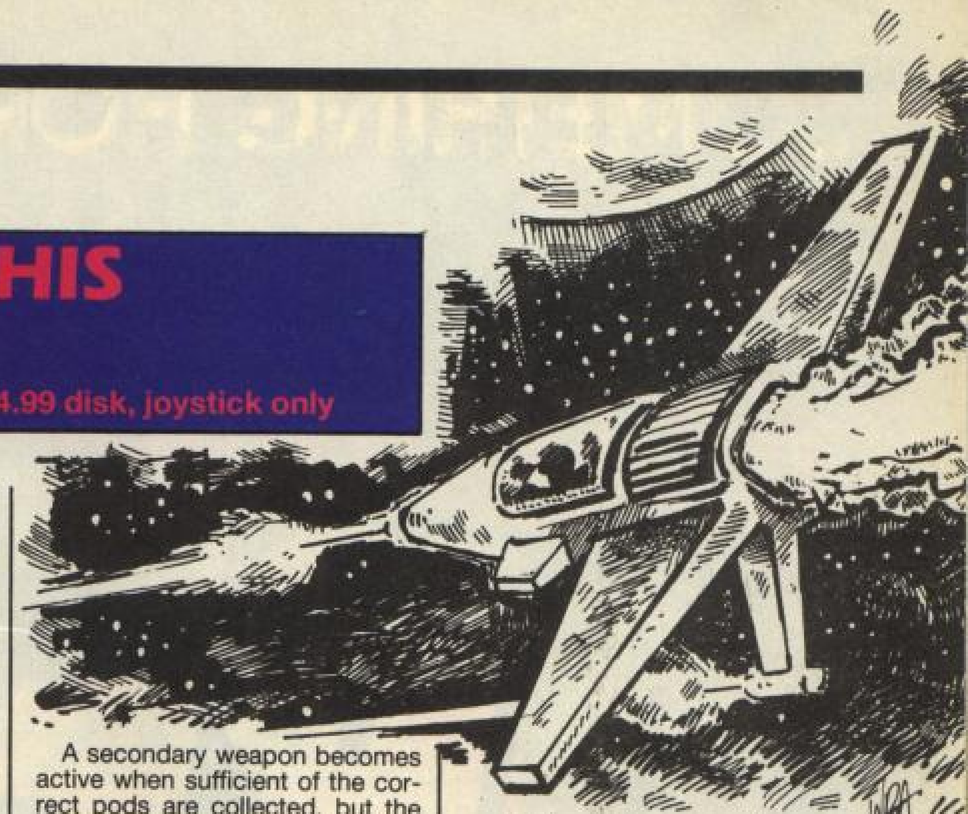
HOOKABILITY 42%
Although the game's structure is quite simple, it still appears confusing at first.

LASTABILITY 28%
Familiarisation with the game merely displays the ease with which computer opponents can be beaten.

OVERALL 32%
An uninteresting and poorly implemented version of the board game at a ridiculously high price.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Ariolasoft, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only



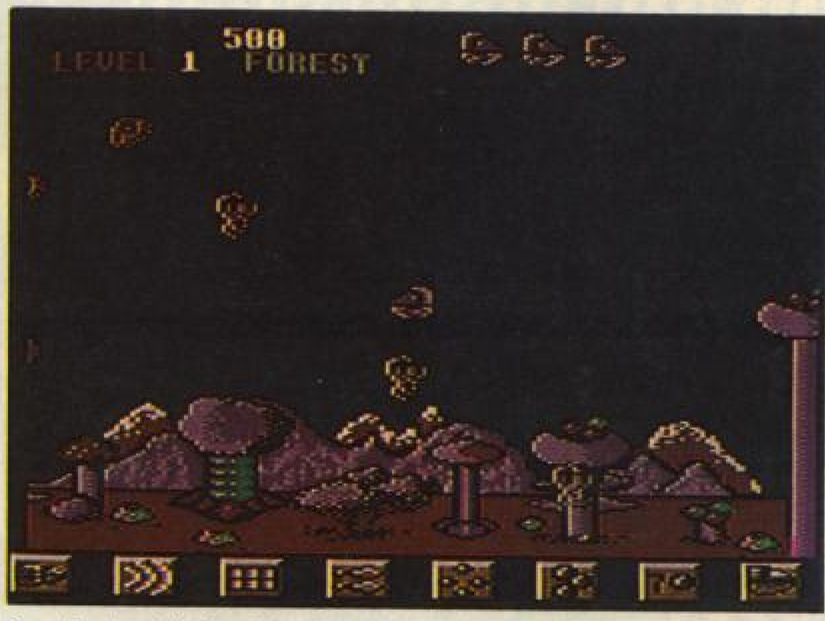
As pilot of the experimental RP2-16 fighter, it's the player's task to test-fly the ship and report on the new engines.

The mission begins with ship and pilot in strange surroundings, facing attacking waves of alien craft. The ship is directed left and right across the horizontally scrolling landscape and avoids or blasts the enemy as required.

A coloured energy pod appears whenever an alien is destroyed, and adds energy to the RP2's secondary weapons system when touched.

A secondary weapon becomes active when sufficient of the correct pods are collected, but the system only remains active for a short amount of time.

When enough aliens are destroyed, an exit icons appears, and is flown into to leave the current level. A bonus screen is safely negotiated to access the next, more difficult, landscape.



► A colourful slice of the Other World in Ariolasoft's latest shoot 'em up



I'm not terribly impressed with Ariolasoft's Fantasy Zone **clone, since it is at best, pointless, and at worst, annoying. The game's progressive nature is more or less superfluous since it takes ages to earn a new weapon, and then it lasts only a few seconds. Collision detection throughout is a bit variable: some ships scrape past without harm while others destroy your ship with the merest touch. The bonus section is the worst offender – negotiating the swarm of wobbly blobs is more a matter of luck than judgement.** Out of this World **is nice to look at and listen to, but the attraction is only skin deep.**



It's instantly apparent that Out of this World **owes a lot to Sega's** Fantasy Zone **– they're very, very similar. The system of collecting the bouncing pods to add extra weaponry is a nice idea, but it's disappointing that only one weapon is operational at a time. The graphics are really colourful and unusual, and the sound is decent, but there's not much variety in the gameplay, with the same alien attack patterns being used time and time again. The interval between levels is very annoying, and luck often dictates whether or not the ship survives the journey to the next level.** Out of this World **provides adequate shoot 'em up action, but is by no means an essential purchase.**



Out of this World **is definitely an offbeat shoot 'em up. It has a very strange sense of movement, with the ship accelerating towards the edges of the screen when moving left or right. The add-on weapons are well worked, but run out too quickly for all the effort and endeavour that goes into collecting them. The second annoying feature is that the interlude between shooting levels is incredibly difficult – much harder than the 'real' levels themselves. This often results in players avoiding the end of level icon that floats around, trying to collect points while they can. Other than these quibbles, the game is pleasant and is as novel an approach to progressive blasting as we've seen on the 64.**

PRESENTATION 71%
Lacking a restart option, but otherwise sufficient.

GRAPHICS 70%
Nicely drawn, with unusual backdrops and similarly colourful sprites.

SOUND 68%
Suitably jaunty soundtrack can be toggled with decent sound effects or silence.

HOOKABILITY 78%
The simple and addictive blasting action is appealing from the start.

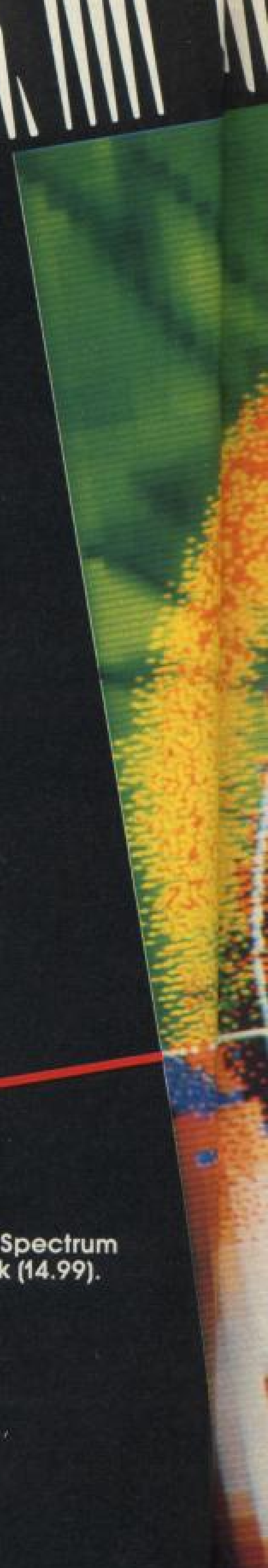
LASTABILITY 42%
Lack of variety proves to be the game's Achilles heel.

OVERALL 55%
A colourful and immediately enjoyable blast which soon becomes tedious.

SOMETHING HORRIFYING AND INE

SCHWARZENEGGER

PREDAT



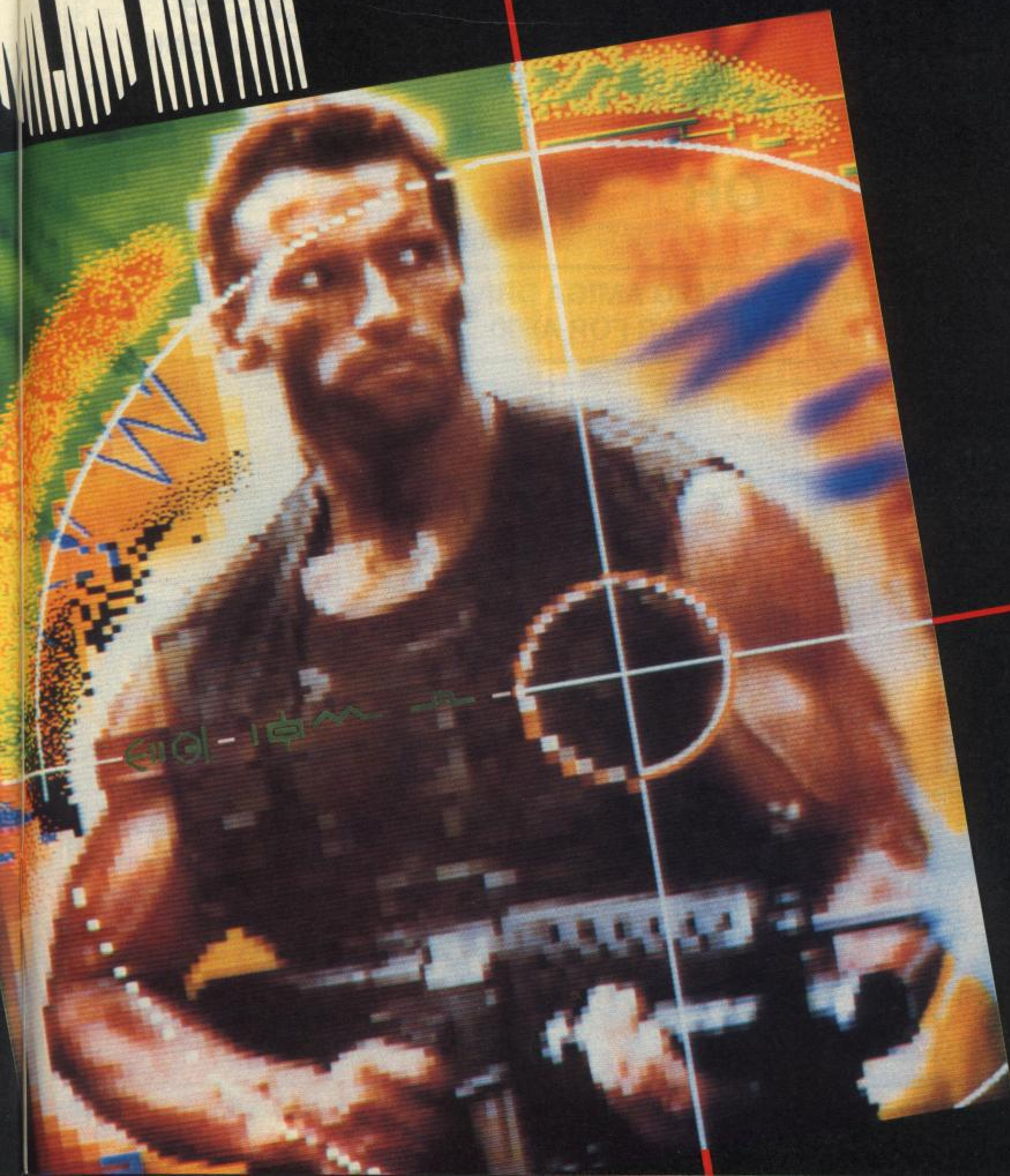
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ACTIVISION



OUT RUN

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys

Sega's best-selling arcade racing game has just been converted to the Commodore 64 by US Gold.

Before the racing begins, one of five different race courses is loaded from cassette. Each one is split into five sections, representing a possible course that could be taken on the original arcade machine.

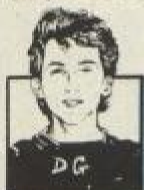
When the course is loaded, the player selects one of two in-game soundtracks, or chooses the 'sound effects only' option. With the formalities over, the race begins.

The screen shows a 3D view of the track from above and behind the player's Ferrari Testarossa. The car has two gears and an accelerator, which come into effect as soon as the starting lights go green.

A digital speedometer and rev-counter inform the player of the car's current performance as it negotiates dips and curves and dodges other traffic. Should the car run into the back of another vehicle it loses speed, but driving into a large roadside feature throws the car off the track and leaves the driver and his girlfriend sitting in a dazed stupor until their vehicle is placed back on the road.

The action is played against a constantly decreasing time limit. Failure to reach the next checkpoint within the limit ends the game, while successfully reaching the goal results in extra time being added for the next section of road.

When the fifth course is completed the driver is given a kiss by his girlfriend, and the game ends.



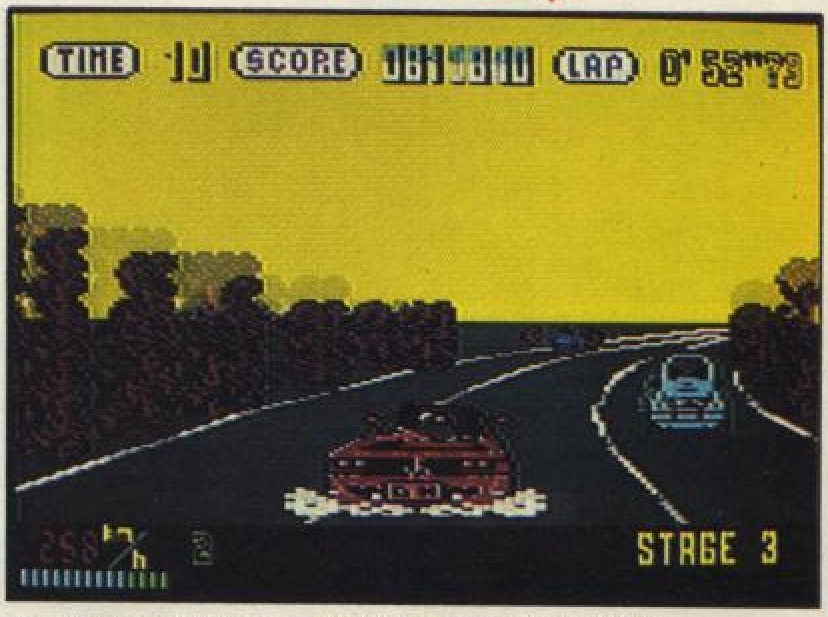
This must be one of the hardest games to convert properly, as the programmers have to compensate for the lack of hydraulics with some other extra-exciting features. US Gold haven't really achieved this, and although they've come up with a competent racing game, it's not really the stuff of enormously important conversions. Although very fast, the graphics are a touch on the blocky side, and the alternating shades that form the road surface actually detract from the feeling of movement, rather then enhance it. The music is quite kind on the ear, and gives a fair rendition of the lively arcade original that enhances the action. If you're after a good car racing game I'd say Buggy Boy **is the one to go for, as it looks and plays far, far better.**



At first, Out Run **looks good. It's very fast and has quite a few of the original arcade game's features. However, things begin to annoy the more it's played. The car doesn't handle very well, and seems to be linked to how busy the computer is – the more going on, the more sluggish it is to respond to the joystick. The big disappointment is that there are only five courses to tackle – and no intersections. Personally, I thought one of the best features of the arcade machine was the freedom in picking a route. With this lost,** Out Run **becomes just another race game. Another big problem – and it is a** very **big problem – is that the game is far, far too easy. It took me four goes to finish the game, and once all the races have been completed a couple of times, the appeal disappears.** Out Run **isn't a disaster, but only offers a few hour's entertainment – which isn't enough for a tenner.**

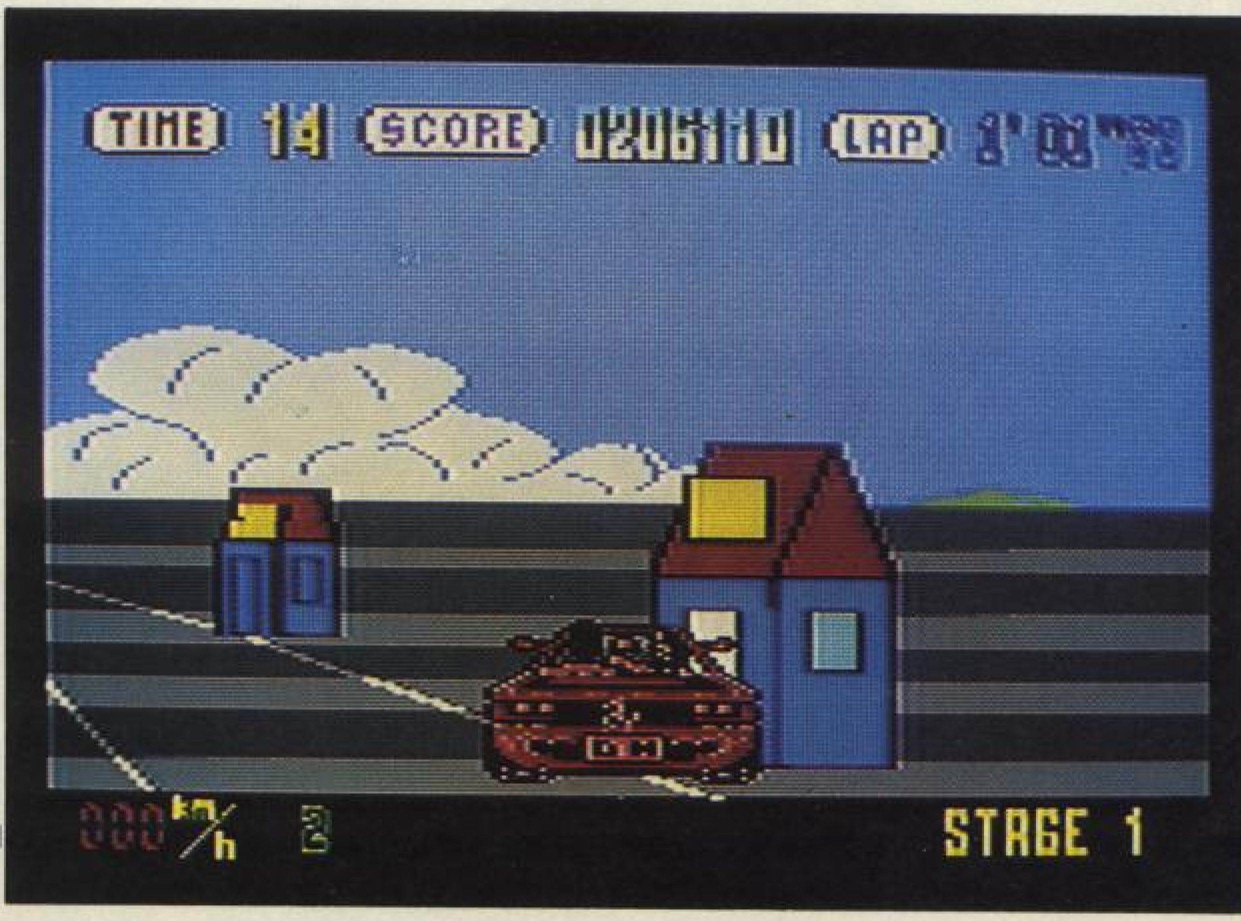


I was expecting quite a lot from Out Run**, which, on reflection, was rather foolish. From a distance it seems to be all there. The graphics move at a tremendous speed and the programmed music is quite representative of the arcade soundtracks, but sitting with a puny joystick instead of a wobbling steering wheel and a red button as the gear shift just doesn't simulate the realism of it's coin-op parent. Apart from increasing the level of difficulty, there aren't really many improvements the programmers could have made. It was a brave effort, I suppose – but just isn't enough.**



► **Collision with the Lego houses doesn't even scratch the paintwork . . .**

► **Embarrassment! A VW beetles past**



PRESENTATION 82%
Reasonable multiload system, and the packaging includes an audio tape of the arcade soundtrack.

GRAPHICS 79%
Fast 3D, but the backdrops and sprites vary between very poor and good.

SOUND 72%
Two competent renditions of the arcade soundtrack, but dire sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 72%
The action is very straightforward, but the poor control method is instantly annoying.

LASTABILITY 41%
Completing all the courses isn't at all difficult, and the appeal is lost thereafter.

OVERALL 68%
A brave attempt, but *Out Run* simply lacks the original's playability and flair.

ZZAP! TEST SIZZLER

PLATOON

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick only

●Ocean's incredibly atmospheric film tie-in

Based heavily on the Academy award-winning Oliver Stone movie, *Platoon* follows the fortunes of five naive young Americans as they battle to survive the Vietnam war. The action is split into four sections, each representing a different chapter of the story.

First is a journey into the depths of the Vietnamese jungle, where the detail attempt to find a village where Viet Cong guerrillas are based.

The jungle pathways are treacherous: booby traps lie in wait for the hapless GIs, and the troop are constantly under the threat of ambush from VC assassins.



I recently watched and thoroughly enjoyed Platoon**, and was therefore very interested to see how Ocean's officially licensed computer game would turn out. Well, I'm glad to say that it's utterly brilliant. The programmers have done a superb job, and have faithfully captured the film's atmosphere. The plot follows the film very closely, and I'm amazed at how much of the story is replayed by the player. The first section is a 100-screen arcade adventure, which is followed by a superb tunnel sequence. Next is the bunker sequence, and finally a desperate race through the forest to kill the renegade Sergeant Barnes. Each section is both challenging and addictive, and the gameplay has been balanced perfectly so that the player progresses a little further with every game. The graphics and sound effects are brilliant throughout, and really convey the dark forest atmosphere so apparent throughout the film.** Platoon **is absolutely superb – a milestone in film tie-ins, and a yardstick by which others shall be judged.**

A box of explosives have to be found in order to blow up the bridge over which the platoon must cross. Failure to do so allows a large VC band to follow the platoon and wipe them out.

Once in the village, a search of the surrounding huts leads to the discovery of a torch, map and trapdoor which leads to the secret underground VC tunnel system – which signals the second stage, which loads separately.

Deep in the tunnel system, the platoon negotiate the dark labyrinth in order to find a compass and a box of flares, vital for completion of the next section.

The tunnels are densely populated with VC guerrillas who constantly appear from behind corners or out of the murky water, and are shot on sight to avoid further platoon casualties.

There are several rooms in the complex which hold caches of equipment. The boxes may be searched, but are frequently booby trapped . . .

Successfully finding the tunnel exit prompts the third chapter – the bunker. Here the platoon find themselves in a foxhole at night with a group of VCs after their blood.

Firing flares into the air highlights the surrounding terrain, and silhouettes the attacking guerrillas, who are shot before they manage to get a bead on your muzzle flashes and shoot back.

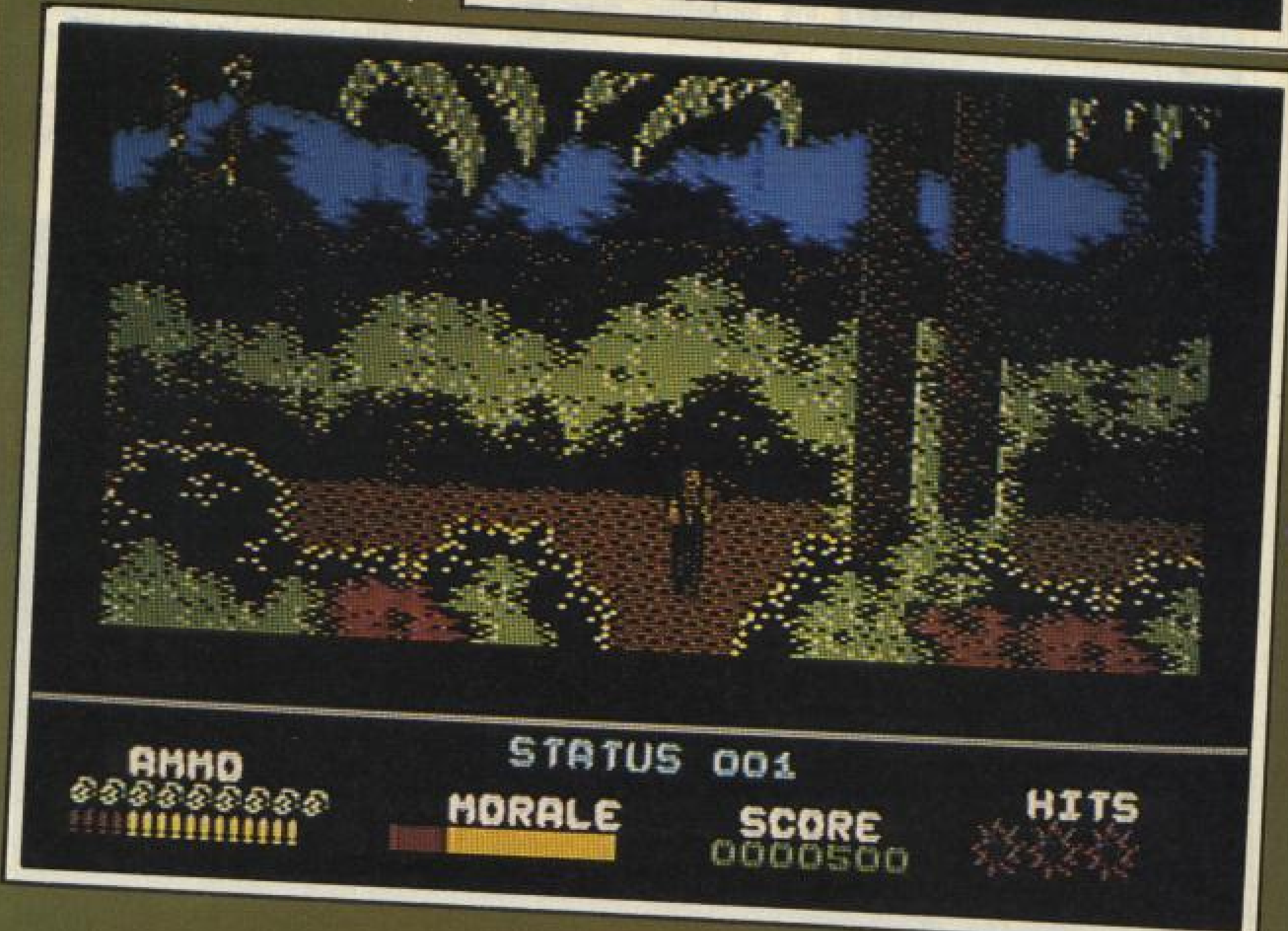
After the VCs are defeated, the platoon enters the final load, which is set in the jungle. Following a radio message, the weary grunts find that the area they're in is about to be Napalmed by their own troops, giving them just enough time to make it to safe ground. The soldiers have to run the gauntlet of VCs, booby traps and barbed wire to reach safety. There are several paths through the vegetation, some of which do not allow exit from the area and thus prove fatal.

Finally, the remaining men, having made it to a supposed safe area, find the only available foxhole taken by Sergeant Barnes – the officer whom they blame for the death of their previous Sergeant. In an attempt to protect himself from their wrath, Barnes opens fire on them. With the air strike imminent, the platoon's only course of action is to grenade the hole and kill Barnes. Once the foxhole has sustained five grenade hits, the platoon may enter the foxhole to escape a fiery grave.

The packaging comes complete with a large film-style poster and an audio soundtrack of 'Tracks of my Tears' by Smokey Robinson – the film's theme tune.

► **One of your Platoon has found the entrance to the VC tunnel system**





▲ ***Platoon*'s maze-like jungle sequence**

▼ Deep in the tunnel system, you find an enemy cache of equipment – but is it booby-trapped?

► The tense night sequence: trapped in a bunker with hordes of Viet Cong guerrillas in the undergrowth





Platoon is quite simply the best film tie-in to date. Nothing is overstated or gaudy, and as a result the atmosphere generated in each of the four levels is superb. The deliberately sombre graphics in the tunnels are broken by the sudden appearance of a knife-wielding soldier, or a blood-hungry maniac pointing a rifle straight at you – fail to kill him, and a sickly blood-splurge oozes onto your viewing screen: brilliant! There are as many puzzles to solve and objects to collect as any arcade adventurer could wish for, but you hardly have time to think, because most of the game is spent frantically blasting the enemy before he blasts you. This on its own would be more than enough, but you get a brilliant package as well. Buy this, but make sure you have some weekends free.





▲ VC knife attack! Gun that Gook



Ocean have made a commendable effort in attempting to actually recreate the storyline of Platoon within a computer format, with the tunnel and bunker sections being particularly tense and atmospheric. This is not to denigrate the other sections, however, since the whole game hangs together well and each of the four sections are worth playing individually. The graphics throughout are extremely good, and the character animation ranges from OK to excellent, specifically, the tunnel section, which is incredible. The realism pervading the game just may well have certain factions up in arms, saying that the violence is too strongly depicted. I'd personally defend Platoon since it's one of the few games where you actually feel that you're fighting for your life, rather than the glory of it. A brilliant release from Ocean – you can almost smell the fear . . .

PRESENTATION 94%
Generally polished and user-friendly, but slightly marred by the necessary, but intrusive multiload. The packaging, complete with poster and audio tape, is superb.

GRAPHICS 93%
Some sections outshine others, but the standard is very high throughout.

SOUND 93%
Each load carries a different soundtrack, which are all atmospheric and suited to the action.

HOOKABILITY 88%
The first section requires mapping for completion, but the action is enticing enough to appeal to most.

LASTABILITY 92%
The four sections should hold interest for some time, and the game is good enough to be worth playing to completion.

OVERALL 94%
A superb combat simulation, and simply the best film tie-in to date – not to be missed.

the GAMES machine

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ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

ATV SIMULATOR
Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

ATV Simulator is a split screen race game where one or two players take control of an all-terrain vehicle and attempt to score the fastest times over a series of off-road courses.

Each course is filled with hazards which the vehicles negotiate. However, if an obstacle is tackled too fast, the driver is dismounted and precious seconds are lost while he remounts. If the timer reaches 30 seconds before the finishing line is crossed, the game ends.



Comparisons to the Kikstart **games are unavoidable when looking at** ATV Simulator, **since both the screen layout and game style are very similar. Unfortunately, the Code Masters offering provides a good deal less enjoyment than did its predecessors, practically bordering on the unplayable. The game looks awful, with bland backdrops and an incompetent ATV and rider. Control of the ATV is overly simple: consisting of fast, slow and 'wheelie' – it certainly doesn't simulate the ATV's I've been on. Generally, a rather shoddy program – to be avoided at all costs.**



▶ What next – a Simulator Simulator?



This should be called Poor Man's Kikstart Simulator, **as it tries to emulate the classic scrambling formula, but fails completely. The split-screen action could have been fun, but unfortunately the control method is very poor, and all you have to do is tackle obstacles at the correct speed. Once you know which speeds to go at, you've mastered the game. The graphics are very bland, and the sound unremarkable.** Kikstart I **and** II **(complete with editor) are both available at the same price – I know which ones I'd rather buy.**

PRESENTATION 82%
One or two player options, and generally thoughtful.

GRAPHICS 45%
Uninspired sprites and backdrops.

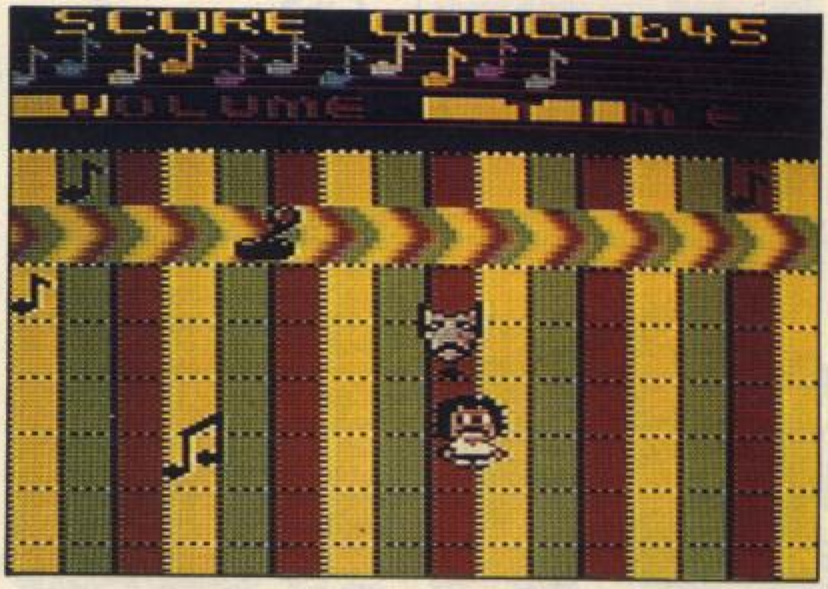
SOUND 57%
Competent, but forgettable tune and functional effects.

HOOKABILITY 51%
The two player mode is fun, but the action isn't particularly exciting.

LASTABILITY 36%
The courses are samey, and consequently the gameplay is ultimately repetitive.

OVERALL 42%
A somewhat hackneyed and dull version of *Kikstart*.





▶ Rockin' Rodney hits that perfect beat boys, in Mastertronic's latest

BEAT IT
Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Rockin' Rodney, star of Task Set's classic *Jammin'*, is back after a five year break.

The action is displayed from overhead, and Rodney runs around collecting notes from coloured sections around the screen. He's unable to cross from one colour to another without using the multicoloured conveyor belts. As each note is gathered the soundtrack gradually builds up a second harmony giving an aural indication of the progress made so far.

Making his task more difficult are creatures whose touch cause Rodney to lose notes, make the screen black and split Rodney in two!



I was pleasantly surprised by Beat It**: the garish screen was immediately offputting, but the gameplay is incredibly addictive, and is also nicely graded to allow easy progress each time you play, but still provide a decent challenge. The whole game is cleverly designed, from the soundtrack which builds up as notes are collected, to the light switch which turns the screen black leaving just Rodney's eyes! Brilliantly hectic and terribly satisfying; a tremendous game which should have you jammin' into the early hours – all 60 screens' worth!**



This really takes me back! Task Set's Jammin' **is nearly five years old – so this sequel has been a very long time coming! It's certainly unusual, and players unfamiliar with the original will find** Beat It **a novel and enjoyable experience as they rush around the hypnotically pulsating screen and build up the soundtrack. The gameplay is very hectic and involves quite a lot of forethought and swift hand-to-eye co-ordination. At two pounds,** Beat It **is definitely a bargain which shouldn't be missed.**

PRESENTATION 87%
Plenty of useful options, and generally well laid out.

GRAPHICS 81%
Imaginative sprites with smoothly moving, highly colourful backdrops.

SOUND 80%
Plenty of rockin' tunes to build up.

HOOKABILITY 87%
Unusual, but the action is instantly appealing.

LASTABILITY 82%
With 60 mazes to tackle, the long-term forecast is good.

OVERALL 88%
A very original and thoroughly entertaining collect 'em up.

SUPER G-MAN

Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

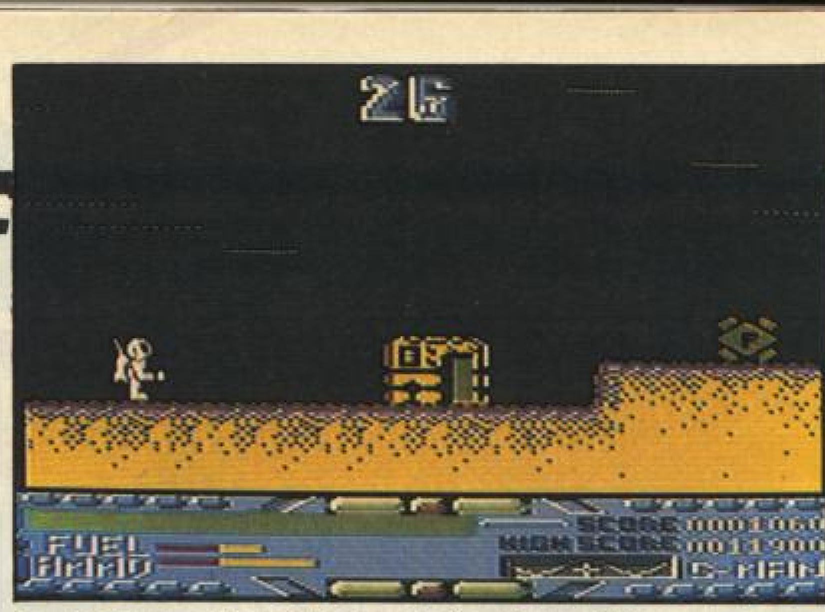
Super G-Man is on a mission to travel across ten horizontally scrolling landscapes. Armed with a limited-range jet pack and a blaster, he zooms across the terrain, picking up extra fuel and ammo and avoiding oncoming hazards.

Each landscape has a time limit, and if G-Man fails to reach the destination transporter hut before it expires, the game ends.





I couldn't believe the control method used on Super G-Man: pull down to move up – ugh! This is a major hurdle to playing the game, since it is so uncomfortable. In moments of crisis, natural tendencies take over and you inevitably move the wrong way, hurtling to your doom. The rest of the game is no real loss, however, either visually, aurally or otherwise. Gameplay is stunningly tedious and this particular cassette belongs a few years in the past. G-Man he might be, but Super he ain't.



The famous astronaut that sounds like a kitchen: G-Man



Well, you can't get much simpler than this. Guide Super G-Man over a very bland horizontally scrolling landscape and reach the destination. There's little else to do, and the action becomes very tedious and completely predictable after a couple of goes. The control method is awkward, and both the graphics and sound are bland. Code Masters are very fond of blowing their own trumpets, but they've really hit a bum note with this one.

PRESENTATION 65%
Nothing outstanding, but pleasant nevertheless.

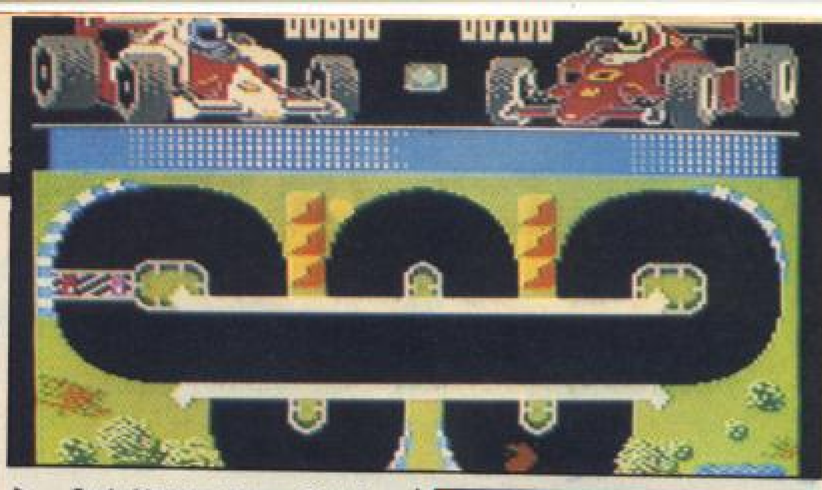
GRAPHICS 41%
Colourful, but unimaginative.

SOUND 49%
Remarkable only for is mediocrity.

HOOKABILITY 27%
Lacks excitement from the outset.

LASTABILITY 13%
The action is very repetitive, and offers little long-term entertainment.

OVERALL 23%
A horribly dull exploration game.



GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

In Code Masters' new racing game, one or two players battle a computer-controlled drone car in a series of three-lap races over 12 tracks.

The action is viewed from above, and the cars race around the track in the quickest possible time. Collision with the side of the track, or a hazard such as an oil slick or puzzle, causes the car to slow down.

Winning is all-important, since coming last in a race means the end of the game.

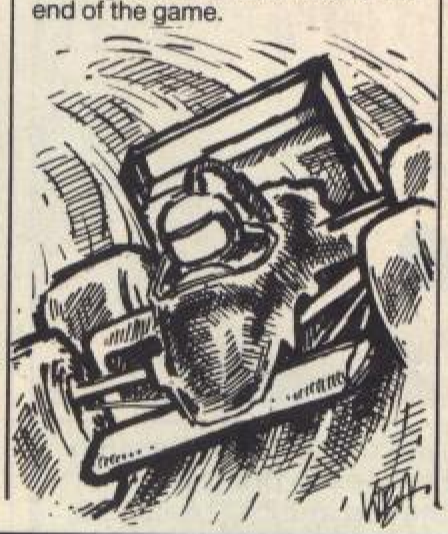


Code Masters' Super Sprint **rip-off isn't all that bad. The cars look like rectangular slabs and the backdrops are pretty bland, but the game offers quite a bit of fun, especially in the two player mode. Control is tricky, with cars sliding around like they're on ice, and it's often difficult to tell which way they're facing, but overall the action is enjoyable, if not a mite repetitive. Definitely one to try if you're a** Super Sprint **fan.**



I must confess to preferring this version of Super Sprint **to the Activision one, simply because of the lack of bugs! The game is fast, competitive and quite enjoyable – especially in the two player mode. The miniscule 'cars' move as if they are in a muddy rally course, swerving all over the track, but the control is less finnicky than its big brother, and quite comfortable when using the keyboard. Not a bad purchase for two quid – you even get digitised speech. Funny accent though . . .**

► **Code Masters' *Super Sprint* clone**



PRESENTATION 78%
One or two player option, but the long delay between plays is annoying.

GRAPHICS 48%
Pathetic sprites and fairly bland backdrops.

SOUND 61%
Run-of-the-mill Dave Whittaker tune and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 64%
Controlling the cars is tricky, but bearable.

LASTABILITY 48%
The 12 different circuits tend toward the repetitive, although there's always fun to be had with the two player mode.

OVERALL 59%
Not overly thrilling, but should provide some fun for *Super Sprint* fans.

ZZAP! WINNERS



Editorial Assistant Glenys Powell **wades through an absolute mountain of entries to bring you the results of the competitions run in ZZAP! Issue 32. Amongst the prizes on offer, a Mastertronic** Motos **arcade machine and the entire Firebird Silver Range. Are you a winner? Read on and find out . . .**

MOTOS ARCADE MACHINE

Aaagh! I've just spent FIVE days opening and checking your entries to this competition – it's definitely the most popular competition I've seen and judged! I was thoroughly impressed with all your efforts, so congratualtions to all of you who took the time to enter. Mastertronic must certainly have tempted you all with their Motos Arcade Machine! After all that, I expect you want to know who the winner is, well, I'm not going to tell you. No, I'm only joking, it's **Chris Burchett**, Abingdon, OX14 2QJ. Congratulations Chris, Mastertronic should be talking to you soon about shipping the machine to your humble abode. But, don't forget, the generous software house were also giving away fifty runner up prizes of copies of the game, so look through the names below as you could well be amongst them. . . . .

Lee Vine, Stockport, SK5 8NN; Marco Lorio, Berks, SL6 2HG; C V Smith, Manchester, M31 4AW; Mansel Harris, Notts, S81 9PS; Neil Matthias, Co Durham, DL2 2AW; Allan Boyd, Isle of Man; Andrew Everton, Shropshire, TF1 4YL; Jann Barnett, Lancs, OL14 6HY; Graham Andrew, Lancs, FY2 9BG; Alan Price, Nr Chester, CK4 0RQ; Alastair Cooper, Surrey, CR3 9HD; Mr M Rouse, Herts, CM1 9BS; J Parkinson, Liverpool, L22 7RH; John Page, Rochester, Kent; M J Horswill, Dorset, BH7 7HF; Gareth Connolly, Lancs, L40 7SJ; David Perry, Staffs, ST3 2EL; Hans Kruse, BK-6823 Ansager, Denmark; Michael Ashton, Tyne and Wear, NE37 1QQ; Paul Allan, Aberdeen, AB2 1XT; David Ball, Lincs, PE17 9LN; R Todd, West Midlands, B75 6BT; Stephen Jones, Chester, CH3 7QR; Chris Van Schaik, 3232 VM, Netherlands; Steve Kirkden, Kent, DA7 6RE; Richard Berger, Manchester, M25 7NW; Roger Jukes, Wolverhampton, WV5 BDH; Dan Knight, Northampton, NNE 9QQ; Paul Garbutt and Richard Brooke, Tyne and Wear, NE34 7PE; Adam Fellows, Mid Glamorgan, CF8 2TN; Peter Groom, Berkshire, RG3 3RD; Bruce Roberts, Essex, CO14 8EA; Martin Kinloch, Hants, RG26 6NH; Henry Alley, Hants, GU14 6NN; Ian Barrow, Cheshire, SK15 1HJ; Ewan J Mapplebeck and Daniel J Lieghio, Kent, CT19 5DB; Marie Darlington, Telford, TF1 4TS; Martin Pattison, Dorset, BH18 9HQ; Mike Blaser, Cheshire, SK8 4HP; Gordon Wright, Norwich, NR1 2QL; David Ashe, Co Louth, Ireland; Paul Cooper, Catford, London, SE6 1PZ; Mark Handley, West Midlands, B71 3EZ; Gareth Rowlands, Sheffield, S6 5FD; Martin Turner, Kent, TN25 4LN; Christopher James Sharpe, Leicester, LE2 4NL; Philip Turner, Herts, SG3 6QA; Adrian Anthony Evans, Devon, EX4 1RB; John Winch, Kent, ME2 3SJ; Ian Hamriding, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

US GOLD'S GOLD

US Gold's Solomon's Sovereigns Comp proved to be a little tricky, and no entries had the 'X' marked on the correct spot. However, **Stephen Cording** of Middlesex, UB3 1QA was the closest, and is the winner of the THREE Gold Sovereigns that the chummy brummies put on offer. The following 25 names came very close, and each recieve a copy of the game . . .

Nathan Clarke, Banbury, Oxon; David Casey, Surrey, CR0 5NZ; P Simmonds, Sussex, BN4 2WA; Diana Theodossiou, Kent, CT1 2PQ; Mark Barrett, Glos, GL7 2LJ; Jay Beard, Middlesex, TW1 3AT; Paul Graham, Northern Ireland, BT82 9PA; Graeme Clark, Lancs.; OL15 0BT; Nicholas Alston, West Midlands, B93 9LU; S Whitehouse, Birmingham, B13 9RG; Gordon White, Lincs, NG32 2EX; Luke A Buckley, Nr Oldham, OL4 4EU; A B Wragg, South Yorkshire, S70 5TG; Nicholas Braybrook, Notts, NG18 4HL; Mark Phillips, Bristol, BS19 3NE; Michael Sharpe, Cambs, PE1 5JQ; Lee Bettridge, Kent, TN15 6DX; Alex Price, West Glamorgan, SA4 2LS; Ben Leonard, Hants, RG26 6QL; Neil Forsyth, Oldham, OL8 2SR; Lindsay Toulson, Sheffield, S6 2NH; Rod Walker, Warks, CV11 4RL; Piratpal Singh Sekhon, Hants, SO5 4RD; Mark Blackwell, Surrey, Dave Connor, Liverpool, L30 1PQ.

ALL OF FIREBIRD'S SILVER

The entire Firebird Silver Range was the first prize of our second competition in Issue 32. All you had to do was unscramble the anagrams to reveal the correct title of five of Firebird's games. The first correct entry out of the bag was from **Lucas Whittaker**, Dyfed, SA44 6LW.

Don't despair if you aren't the said Lucas Whittaker, because there are prizes for ten runners up – who will receive five Firebird Silver releases of their choice. So, get reading to see if you are among them . . .

David Dickinson, Cornwall, PL17 7EJ; David Harker, Northumberland, NE65 8UU; Steven Williams, London, N16 8VE; Steven Bramley, Sheffield 5, S5 7JB; Jason Woodfield, Leics, LE7 8EU; James Sturrock, Scotland, EH4 2JB; T C Luu, Northampton, NN4 9TH; Kevin Alcock, Dublin 7, Ireland; David Kenning, Kent, CT10 1BN; Paul Hynes, Dublin 3, Ireland.

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40.00 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): Andrew White, Bristol, BS9 4EE.

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): Matthew Sesan Brandon, Cheltenham, South Australia; Derek Simpson, Waterford, Eire; Tony David, Sittingbourne, ME10 3AD; Robert Stock, Dinas Powys, CF6 4NY.

If you have any complaints about competitions, please write to me, GLENYS POWELL, RESULTS COMPLAINTS, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB and I will do my best to sort it out. Please remember that we don't send out prizes from Newfield (only in a few exceptional cases), it's actually the Software companies that sponsor the competition who do – and sometimes there are delays. I do my best not to let this happen, but obviously things do go wrong from time to time, so be a little patient. However, if you haven't received your prize within 28 days of the winners being announced, don't hesitate to let me know.

See you next month!

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ZZAP! READERS'



GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(10%)*
System 3

2 *(3)* **CALIFORNIA GAMES** *(9%)*
US Gold/Epyx

3 *(2)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE** *(7%)*
Firebird

4 *(4)* **WIZBALL** *(5%)*
Ocean

5 *(6)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD** *(5%)*
US Gold/Access

6 *(16)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE +** *(5%)*
System 3

7 *(5)* **BARBARIAN** *(3%)*
Palace

8 *(10)* **ZYNAPS** *(3%)*
Hewson

9 *(8)* **WORLD GAMES** *(2%)*
US Gold/Epyx

10 *(9)* **KIKSTART II** *(2%)*
Mastertronic

11 *(7)* **LEADERBOARD**
US Gold/Access

12 *(11)* **GAUNTLET**
US Gold

13 *(14)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

14 *(12)* **ELITE**
Firebird

15 *(13)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird

16 *(19)* **RENEGADE**
Ocean

17 *(15)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

18 *(20)* **BOULDERDASH**
Prism

19 *(28)* **ARCADE CLASSICS**
Firebird

20 *(17)* **DELTA**
Thalamus

21 *(27)* **QUEDEX**
Thalamus

22 *(-)* **BUGGY BOY**
Elite

23 *(21)* **HEAD OVER HEELS**
Ocean

24 *(22)* **ROAD RUNNER**
US Gold

25 *(25)* **I,BALL**
Firebird

26 *(23)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen

27 *(-)* **SUPER SPRINT**
Activision

28 *(18)* **URIDIUM**
Hewson

29 *(-)* **NEBULUS**
Hewson

30 *(29)* **SOLOMON'S KEY**
US Gold

S' CHARTS — FEBRUARY 1988



MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **DELTA** *(25%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

2 *(2)* **SANXION** *(10%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

3 *(10)* **ARCADE CLASSICS** *(9%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

4 *(4)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE** *(6%)*
Martech
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

5 *(3)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(5%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

6 *(5)* **WIZBALL** *(4%)*
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

7 *(6)* **GAME OVER** *(3%)*
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

8 *(7)* **I,BALL** *(3%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

9 *(-)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE +** *(3%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

10 *(8)* **GREEN BERET** *(2%)*
Imagine
Loading Music – Martin Galway

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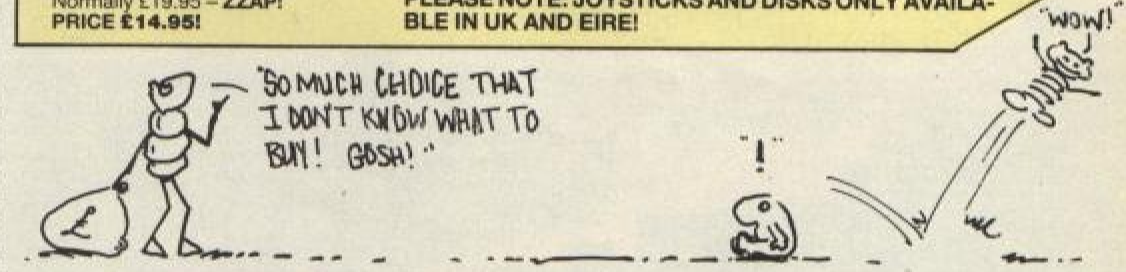
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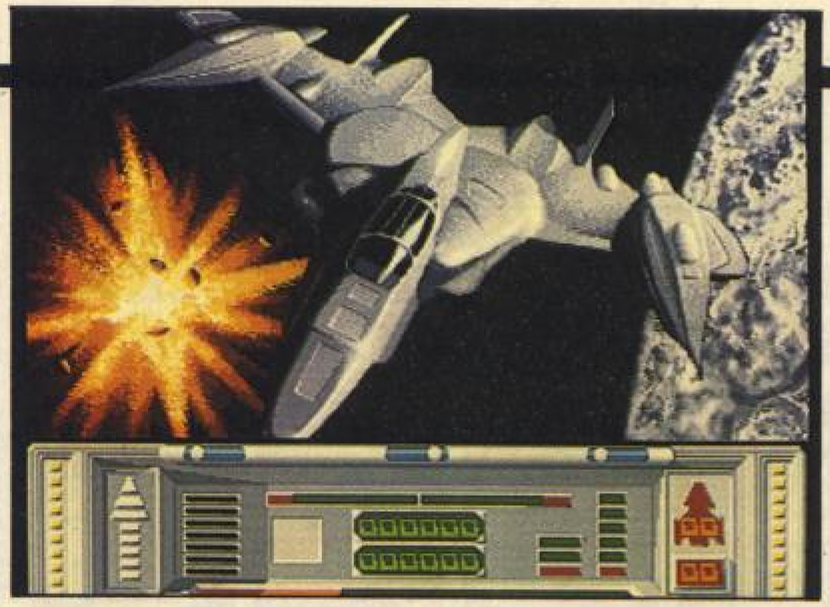
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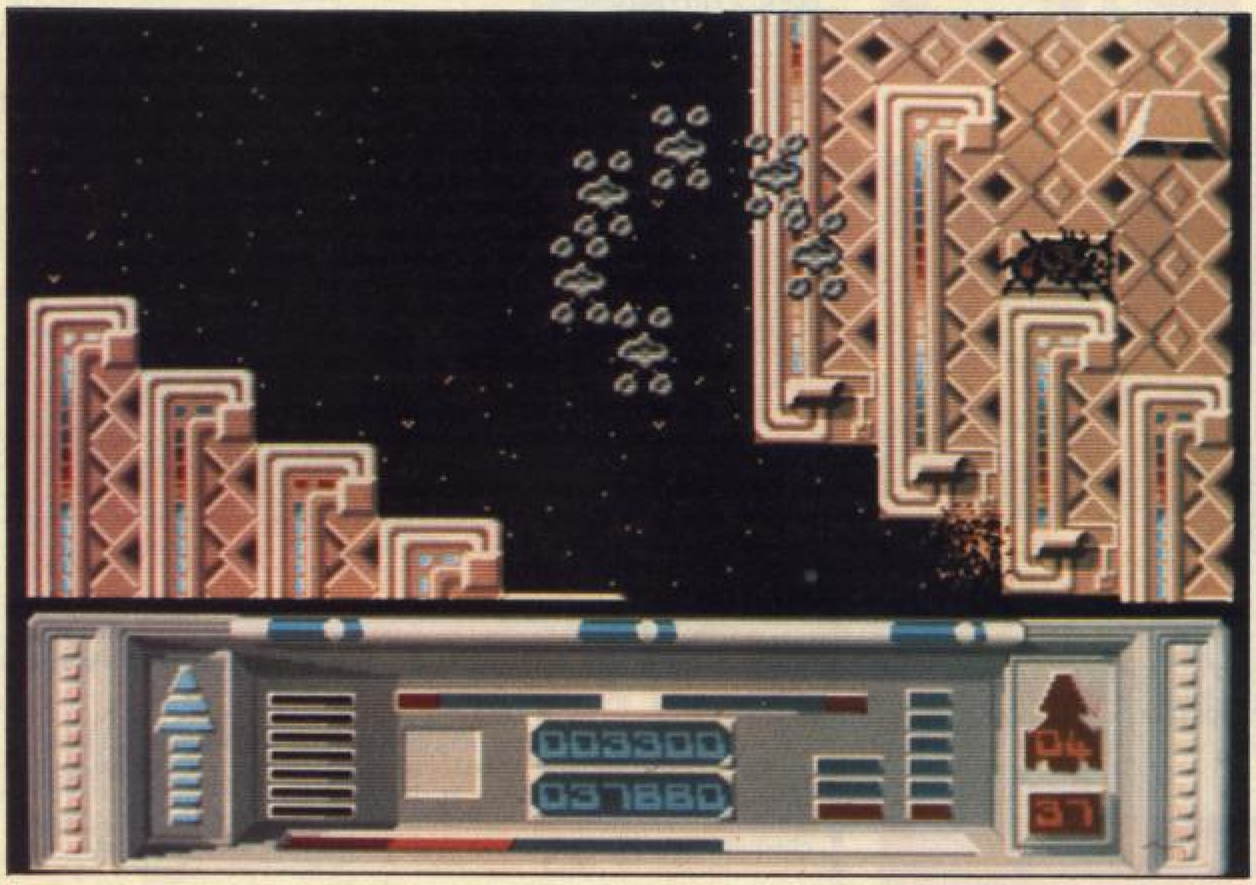
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AMIGA ACTION





Amiga products have been steadily trickling in for the last few months now, most of which are conversions of Atari ST or even 64 games. One original Amiga program, however, is Microdeal's *Insanity Fight* (top left, top right), a progressive blasting game set over the surface of a giant space station, and later in deep space.

The action is hectic and quite entertaining, but the graphics rely heavily on bland bas-relief backdrops and some rather uninteresting sprites, which fail to take the breath away as they should.

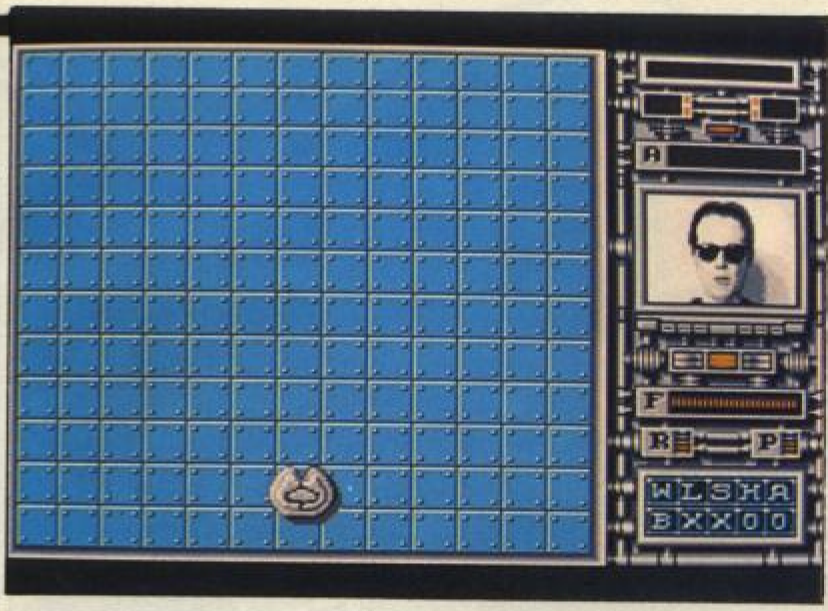
Rather more down-to-Earth action is to be had with Electronic Art's *Test Drive* (bottom left). On selecting a beautifully drawn sports car – Porsche, Lamborghini, Ferrari or Lotus – the player's driving abilities are tested on a twisting, winding mountain road. The interior of each car is represented well, but the exterior scenes of moving roadways and traffic are less than convincing, and fail to convey any feeling of movement or speed. The control is unresponsive and the general impression is one of pointlessness.

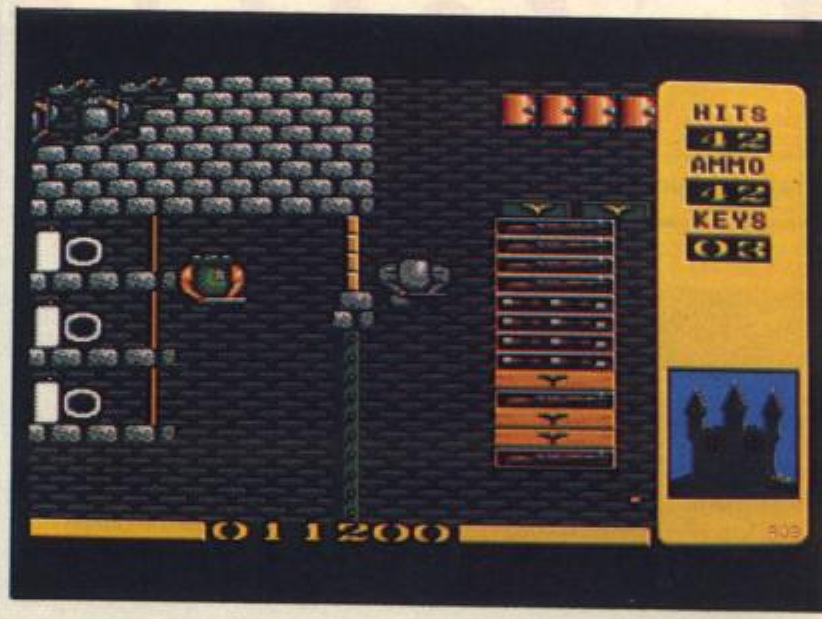


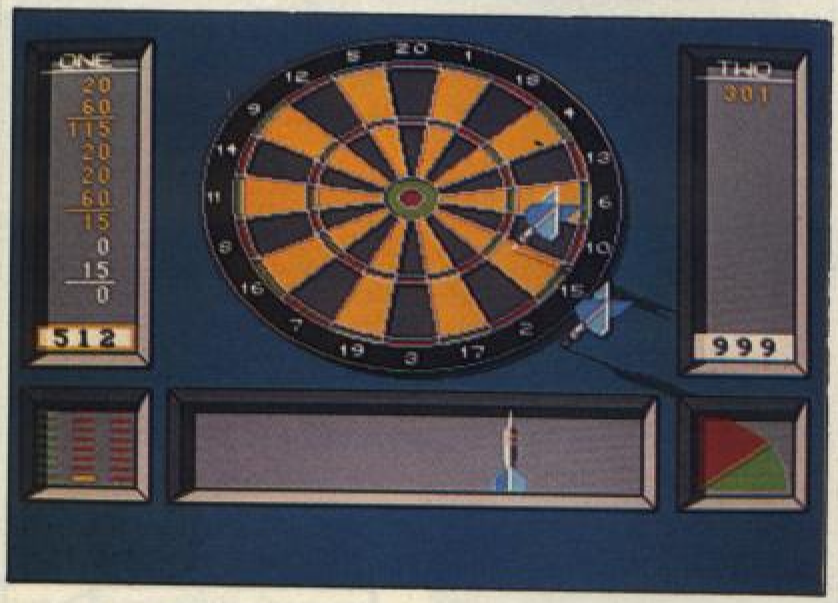


English Software's second foray into the 16-bit world (*Q-Ball* being the first) comes as a conversion of the diagonally-scrolling shoot 'em up, *Leviathan*. It's quite smart to look at, but the gameplay is flawed, with a poor control method and rather repetitive action. Surprisingly, the landscape judders slightly when scrolling, and the static starfield of the 64 has been removed in favour of inky blackness. Not the best Amiga shoot 'em up by a long chalk.

Another 64 conversion, which comes off rather better is *Into the Eagle's Nest* (top right) from Pandora. The Amiga version is graphically close to the Atari ST version, but still captures the spirit of the original and pro-













vides a good mixture of exploration, blasting and survival. The atmosphere is further enhanced by some brilliant sampled sound effects and a stirring title tune.

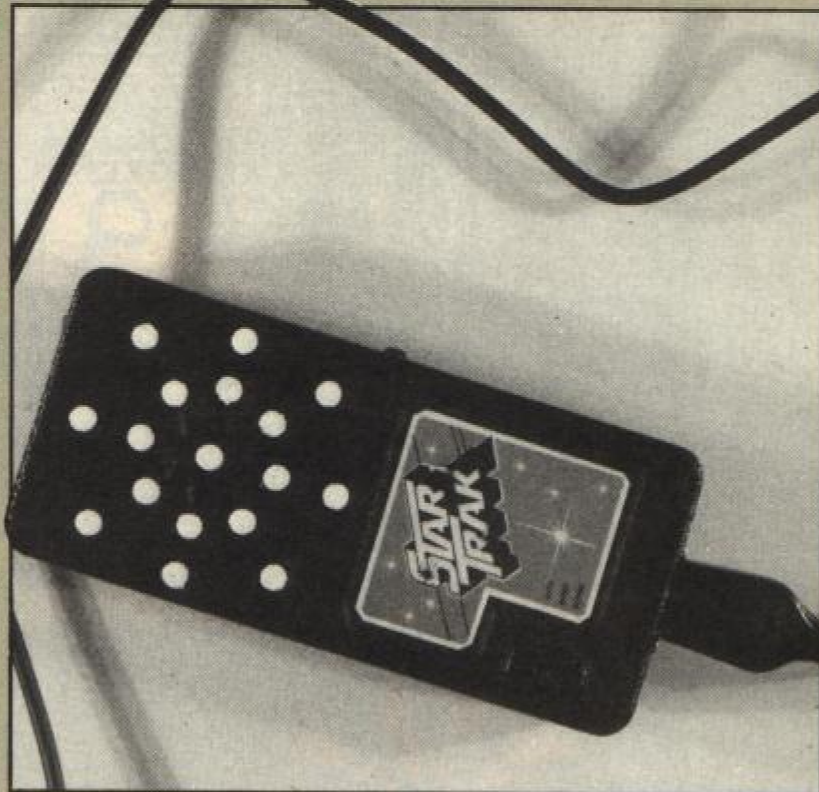
The second of this month's vertically-scrolling progressive shoot 'em ups sees the player take control of a craft able to change from a tank to an aircraft and vice versa. *Xenon* (top left) from Melbourne House is a perfect conversion from the Arcadia coin-op and features some stunning metallic backdrops. The action is fast and furious as the player battles through wave after wave of spectacular alien emplacements and creatures. Don't miss it!

Those of a less aggressive nature should take a look at Databyte's *Indoor Sports* (middle left). This four-sport package fared only averagely on the 64, and it has been faithfully converted to the Amiga, poor gameplay and all. Only the table-top ice hockey proffers any real enjoyment, ten-pin bowling and table-tennis are merely average, and the darts section is quite poor. Again, the graphics do nothing to show off the capabilities of the machine, and the music is dire.

The Amiga is quite big in Germany, so it's only natural that German 64 games should be converted to their big brother rather more quickly than their English counterparts. *Western Games* (bottom left) is one such game, and it too is a faithful representation of the original. The graphics, as expected, are a lot prettier and the sound effects are much improved. Again, however, the gameplay has been ported over, lock, stock and hassle, and is overcomplex and not terribly rewarding.

One of the first 'budget' releases to appear on the Commodore flagship is Code Masters' *BMX Simulator* (bottom right). Reviewed way back in ZZAP! issue 20, the one ninety-niner proved quite popular, and the same can be said of the game in its latest guise. The dirt track backdrops are similar in style, but have been improved tremendously, as have the tiny sprites. Gameplay is similarly appealing, and includes a highly competitive two-player mode. *BMX Simulator* is definitely one to try.

STAR TRAK – THE FINAL FRONTIER?



RH Design have entered the joystick market with the latest in revolutionary game controllers. Called the *Star Trak*, it's shaped rather like a TV remote-control, and commands are delivered via two concentric sets of eight red and black buttons, plus one single red button in the centre. The outer ring of red buttons respond to movement and fire, while the inner black buttons respond to movement alone, making it ideal for beat 'em ups.

The control also supports three fire modes, giving continuous auto-fire, auto-fire with the button down and normal fire.

The *Star Trak* costs £18.85 and comes complete with a 12-month guarantee. Enquiries should be made to RH Design, Units 2 & 3 Stonefall Ave, Harrogate HG2 7NR.

OOPS! ACTION SOFT

Apologies go to Action Soft, whose helicopter simulation, *Thunderchopper*, was reviewed last month at an advertised disk price of £14.95. The correct price should have read £19.95. Sorreee.

CAPCOM ARE GO!

In a big licensing deal, US Gold's secondary label GO! has signed with Capcom to exclusively release conversions of ten of their forthcoming arcade games over the next 15 months.

Plans are already under way to release Commodore 64 versions of *1943, Black Tiger*, a *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* clone, *Street Fighter*, an *Exploding Fist*-type fighting game, and *Tiger Road* – the rest are as yet unannounced.

MASTERTRONIC SIGN TECHNOS

Budget kings, Mastertronic have recently secured the rights to all current and future releases from Japanese arcade development company, Technos.

All releases will be available on the Melbourne House label, starting with *Double Dragon*, the highly successful arcade game in which one or two players enter the seedy side of town and battle gangs of street thugs.

More news as and when . . .

COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU

The long-awaited sequel to the Epyx classic, *Impossible Mission* is soon to be upon us. Once again agent 4125 comes face to face with the evil professor Elvin Atombender – or will do if he gets the chance!

The action takes place in a large tower block, the design of which is based on the Westin Boniventure hotel in Los Angeles. The building has a central circular tower surrounded by eight smaller towers, each of which carries a specific theme, such as offices, parking garages, sports facilities and so on. The level of difficulty for each tower is set in accordance with the theme involved: parking garages are the easiest to compete, while the executive suites provide the hardest challenge.

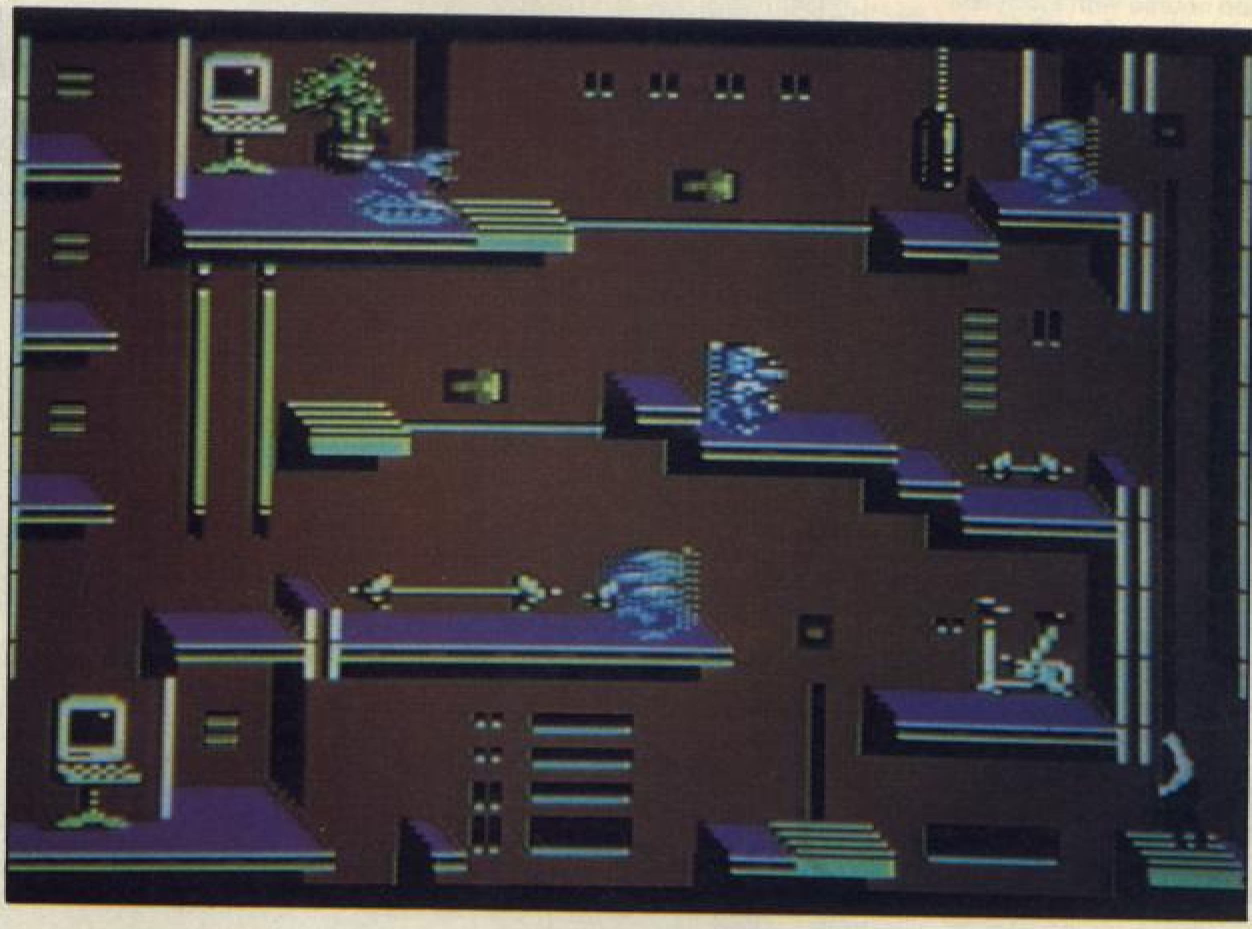
Agent 4125 begins his mission in any of the eight towers and must initially discover the object which conceals the combination to the safe for that specific tower. Each tower has a safe, and every stronghold contains one of Elvin's PIN's. There are five non-duplicate and three duplicate, so six different PIN's are needed to access the central tower's elevator, and thus Elvin's laboratory.

Completion of each tower is under a strict time limit. If the timer expires, 4125's unauthorised entry is noticed, the air is turned off, and the agent dies.

As with its predecessor, the immediate action is based around the negotiation of platform-style rooms and their myriad of robot guards, who have been redesigned to provide a more worthy adversary to the experienced agent. Luckily, the interim years have been kind on 4125 who is as agile as ever, retaining his ability to run and somersault.

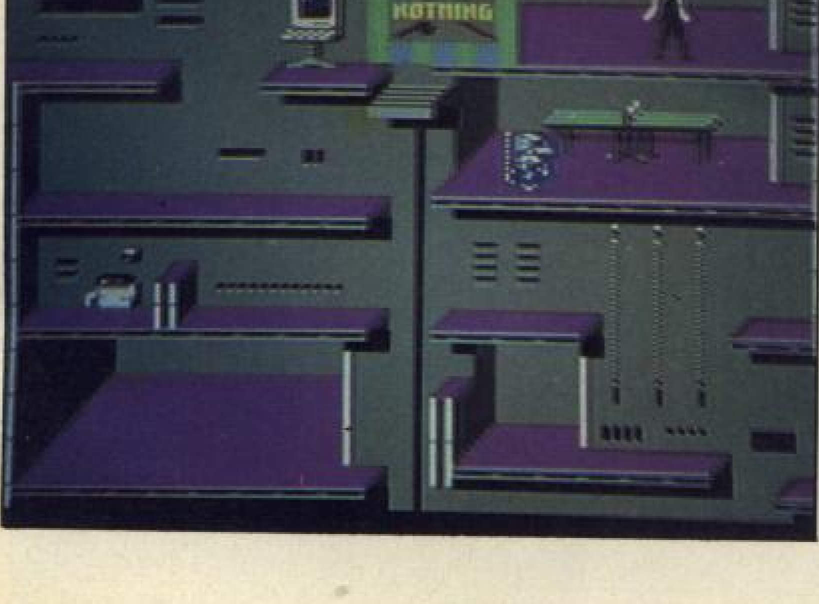
Solving each room has become more complex, however, being dependent in many cases on the use of bombs and mines to remove walls and floors, and the discovery of trapdoors. 4125 retains his trusted pocket computer, which is used in this mission to decode the numbered keys found around the rooms, and thus give access to different towers

Immediate impressions of an all-but-finished version of *Impossible mission II* are, to say the least, good. The classic design of the original has been retained but improved upon, with better graphics and gameplay. We can't wait . . .

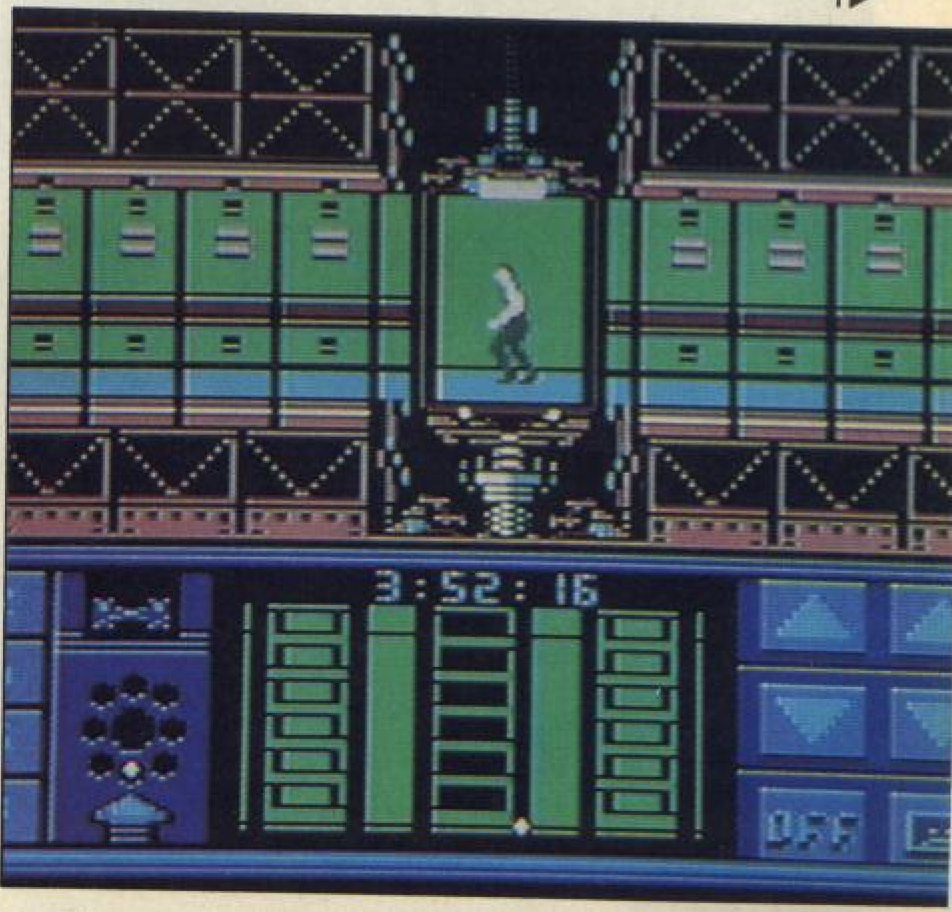


► Agent 4125 comes out of retirement to confront the warped professor Elvin Atombender once more

► Based on the Westin Boniventure hotel in Los Angeles, *Impossible Mission II* has more than its fair share of different rooms!



► Elvin's choice of decor still hasn't improved after all these years



►

Having departed the offices of Gremlin Graphics to set up business under the banner of Teque Software Development Ltd, Shaun Hollingworth and Pete Harrap have recently completed *Terramex*, their latest arcade adventure.

A large asteroid is on a collision course with Earth and unless it can be deflected, millions of humans are doomed. The only man capable of devising a machine to do so, is the brilliant professor Dr Albert Eyestrain, who is currently in a state of self-imposed exile.

The player takes the role of one of five men of different nationalities, and embarks on a mission to find both the Dr and the components necessary to complete his machine. Each character completes the game in his own fashion, so there are effectively five ways in which to save the earth.

Terramex is to be released on the Quicksilva label and should be reviewed next issue.

▼ The very cosmopolitan arcade adventure, *Terramex*





► Looks like they got Freddy Hardest to fly the 'plane!



► A digital Arnie flexes his pixels in *Predator*

Bedlam is a new shoot 'em up due out in January on the GO! label. The vertically scrolling action is set in deep space, and features large animated aliens (16 sprites together), 16 landscapes plus a bonus 'pinball' level. There's also a dual player option where players can bounce each other around the screen! The action sounds quite frenzied and hectic, but we'll have to wait and see . . .

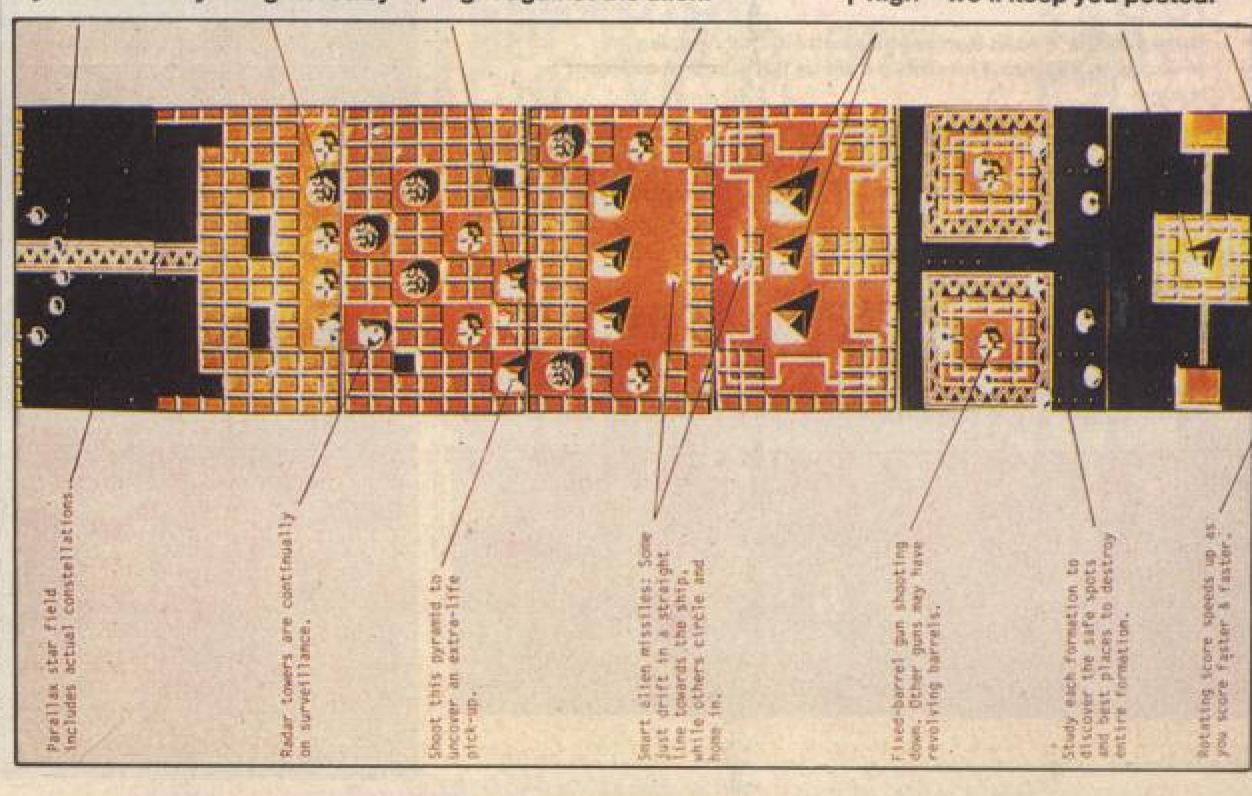
Riding high on a crest of anticipation for 20th Century Fox's latest cinematic venture, comes Activision's game *Predator*.

The game follows Major Dutch Schaefer and his team into the South American jungle on a secret rescue mission. The first stage depicts the mission itself, as the team obliterate a camp of guerrilla fighters.

En route back to base, however, the team begin to die one by one – brutally slaughtered by an unknown foe of incredible strength and ferocity. Thus enters the second stage, where a lone Dutch begins his solo fight against the alien.

Predator features some extremely effective parallax jungle sequences and a very realistic Arnie sprite. Promise is high – we'll keep you posted.

► GO!'s vertically scrolling blasting game sports two player simultaneous action




PLATOON
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